1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

in the same *padar*, and here he was able to dig a hole without any root growing across it; a few roots at the side of the hole did not matter, and the finding of a stone when the hole was half dug was considered lucky. In this hole he planted a pole of *saja* wood with a forked top, to one arm of which he had tied a bundle of thatching grass, and after filling in the hole around it with earth he sprinkled some grains of rice in two heaps in front of the pole in the name of the Village Mother, the clan-god and the local spirits. The next morning he came with the elders to inspect the two heaps of grain, and as he found them scattered about, he had to dig a fresh hole exactly as before, plant the *saja* pole in it, and lay two heaps of grain again in front of it. Next morning they found the two heaps undisturbed, and so considered that the omens favoured this as the village site. The *saja* pole was left there to serve as one of the supports for the roof-tree of the *perma's* house, and the building of the new village was begun without further ceremony. Had the heaps of grain been found again disturbed, they would have decided against that *padar* and tested the omens in the same way in another *padar*. A sacrifice to the Village Mother and the Earth (*Bhum*) had preceded the actual settling in the new site.

Houses

On page 121 are a rough sketch and ground-plan of a typical Bison-horn Maria house in the village of Teiam in Kuakonda *pargana*. The inner house, consisting of the *wijja-lon* ('seed-house') in the rear, and the *narma-lon* ('middle house') in front of it, is made first; and then the *oser* ('veranda') is added, with slightly lower eaves. Though from indoors the *oser* seems just an integral part of the house, the different levels of the eaves make the house look from the outside like two card houses built on different levels. Sometimes also a second or even a third *oser* has subsequently been built on to the first, each with lower eaves, increasing still further the card house appearance. The thatch is of forest grasses or of the dwarf palms (*Phoenix sylvestris* and *Phoenix farinifera*) which are such common features of the undergrowth of the Bastar forests, and is neater than the thatch of Hill Maria houses. The doors are usually pieces of bamboo wicker-work sliding between pairs of vertical posts, like the doors of the Hill Maria houses; but sometimes the sections of wicker-work are hinged on to a doorpost by knotted pieces of split bamboo. In the richer and more advanced villages, wooden doors and padlocks are not unknown.

The *wijja-lon*, like the Hill Maria's *lonu*, is used both as a store-room and for the cult of the Departed. There being no pile granaries or long granaries, the year's harvest, not only of grain but also of forest produce, is stored in the *wijja-lon*, and so a storage platform

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *ahki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *uspal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc. If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orha*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 and frequently fowls also, and dogs. From the platform radiate
342 cords of *siari* twine to bamboo rattles hung from trees or posts in
513 various parts of the field, to enable the occupant to scare birds or animals. It is taboo (*polo*) for women to sleep in these field-houses (*dodi*). Less elaborate sleeping or resting platforms are also made which are really cots surrounded with rough round bamboo walls; for women to cook and to rest in during the heat of the day rough conical shelters are made of bamboos and leaves, like Red Indian
241 wigwams, known as *panambaksha*. They may also erect big and
343 small sheds called *ketul*, consisting of thatched eaves resting on upright posts, unwalled; rough granaries for storing grain until it is removed after the harvest to the permanent granaries; and log platforms for stacking the reaped sheaves.

241 Sowing is begun after the first showers of the monsoon rains, in Na month. The date is fixed at a meeting of the men in the dormitory (*gotul-lon*) a day or two beforehand.

[834] **Sowing** From the night before the sowing (*wijja'i*) till all the seeds have sprouted, it is taboo for men to cohabit with their wives, and they therefore sleep with the bachelors in the dormitory.

241 Before sunrise on sowing day the head of each family goes to the forest and picks two *saja* leaves to serve as 'seed-leaves' (*wijj-ahk*).
●769 These he brings into the *lonu* room of his house, and lays on the floor near the Pot of the Departed; he squats down before them, raises his hands, palm to palm, to his forehead, and lowers them, fists closed, to the floor in front of the leaves, saying, '*Tador-pepi mit kenjat! Miku har kihanom, inje kenjatu, aru maki nehna nehna anam wayi! Inje ram aimatu, manemasi mantu!*' (Hearken, O Ancestors! We adjure you, hearken now, and let us have an excellent harvest! Let not your wrath now fall upon us, and be not deaf to my prayer).[1] He then hangs the two leaves from the kitchen (*angadi*) ceiling, where they remain till next seed-time, when he takes them down, and deposits them on a forest path.

241 On behalf of all the villagers also, the *kasyeq-gaita* makes a public offering of an egg to the Village Mother, either at her regular shrine or at some white ants' hill close to the village (not in the *penda* fields), before they go out to sow. No women may attend this ceremony.

At the first sowing they broadcast the early ripening varieties of the hill millets over about half the *penda* plots, and sow also lines of *til* or roselle to mark the limits of individual holdings. Subsequent sowings of later crops are not preceded by any ceremony.

[1] Literally, word by word, 'Ancestors, you hear! To you remembrance we make, now hear, and to-us good good harvest let-be! Now anger let-not-be, hearing abide.'

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen. When making his offerings, the *kasyeq-gaita* adjures the Mother to remain favourable to the village.

All return then to the clan-god, and here the clan-priest offers for each village some of the new grain and cuts the throat of the cocks and pigs brought by each *kasyeq-gaita*, sprinkling blood from each victim on the clan-god, on whom he calls to be ever present to help them, in weal or woe, in field or forest, at home or abroad. In the less important new-eatings, if the practice among the Bārdal clan observed in August 1930 at Kutul is universal, the flesh of the sacrificed animals is not then eaten in a communal feast, but divided among the men present, each of whom takes it to his home, where the male members of the family alone eat it with new grain. Some liquor is drunk in the houses by the men and the unmarried girls, but this is not an essential part of the proceedings. The fermented rice gruel, *landa*, which is always freely consumed at Bison-horn Maria *pandums*, is never even manufactured by Hill Marias, who say that it is taboo to them. After the return of each village delegation to its village, the local *kasyeq-gaita* (whether there is a *bhum-gaita* or not) performs a similar ceremony on a smaller scale before his Village Mother; this in some clan-areas is attended by the clan-priest also, as a guest, but not as a celebrant except in a few large villages to which the clan-god is brought for the occasion; in some other villages a cairn or table-stone is set up near the Village Mother's shrine, and, like her shrine, sprinkled with blood. Nor are the Departed forgotten, for they, too, can harm the garnered crops or the next harvest. The housewife pounds the new grain before the festival in a specially made mortar hole with a pestle (*uspal*) washed in water newly drawn from a running stream. She cooks it in the *lonu* room on the Hearth of the Departed (see p. 114 above), and the ashes of this fire are never swept away. In the evening, before the new food is eaten, she places a little as an offering on the floor just in front of the Pot of the Departed, with some appropriate djuration; and some she places in three *siari* leaves, which in the early morning her husband deposits outside the village by the side of some path (never, apparently, at the cemetery or the Stones of the Dead (*kotokal*)), saying, '*Kopa-kopi munata tado-pepi hisor mator, ade hintoram*,' meaning, 'We give what our grandfathers and great-grandfathers used to give to their ancestors of old.'

The association of the clan-god with the three first new-eatings is not so marked as at the last, which is the harvest-home celebration. The tendency is to regard them more as domestic than even village ceremonies. No dancing or drumming is allowed at them, and no

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

stones; the platform is thus sloped against the stream, and small fish coming down are unable to get through the meshes of the wicker-work, and are thrown by the water high and dry on to the downstream end of the platform; this is merely an elaboration of the *dandar* trap regularly made in the plains by other Koitor at corners of rice-fields where there is any considerable fall in the level of a main irrigation current. 226

The Bison-horn Marias have four or five different kinds of nets, and field fish traps of three or four kinds varying in size from the big field *dandar* above to the *bisar*, a small cylindrical trap of reeds or canes fastened together with wefts of cord, with inverted cones of similar construction inside; the narrow mouth at one end of the trap is fixed close to a small hole made through the embankment of a flooded rice field, and the small fry washed through the hole into the trap cannot escape through the cones. Women make a series of small mud dams across the swampy ends of tanks or pools, and dry out the space enclosed by each dam in turn by throwing the water out with winnows or baskets; they then collect what fish are left in the mud.

In the north of the State the Bhattras, Parjas, Murias and low-caste Hindus always precede the ceremonial eating of new mangoes at Aktai, the local name for the Hindu festival of Akshya Trittya, which falls usually in the second fortnight of April, by a ceremonial *parad* for fish; their general method is for all the men to go into the forest to gather the leaves, roots and fruits used for poisoning fish, then to poison the selected and previously dammed rivulet or small tank; after the stupefied fish have been collected and divided, each family cooks and eats the fish with the new mangoes, and the head of the family goes to the source of their usual water-supply and offers water in a new *handi* with a little grain in the name of the ancestors. In Gondi this is called the ceremony of '*Yer upihana pen hanal*' (offering water to the clan-god and the Departed). Some Bison-horn Marias observe this practice also before their own Marka Pandum, or New Mango Festival, but they prefer having a real beat for fish to poisoning pools, though both they and the Hill Marias frequently poison pools. But most Bison-horn Marias beat for fish at all times of the year, except the rains, when there is too much water, just for sport, and join for this with villagers of other castes, such as Jhari Telanga, Halba or Parja. As many as fifty or sixty square-meshed nets are collected, about four feet deep, and the bottoms of the nets are weighted with stones, while pieces of wood are fastened on the top edge to act as floats. Before the nets are arranged in the water, the *perma* (village priest or spiritual headman, corresponding in Bison-horn villages to the 226 769 226

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

273 water, and the latter on the fire, so that the contents of the upper *handi* may be well steamed. When they have been steamed long enough, they are mixed in another *handi* with water to the consistency of *pej* gruel, and left in a cool place to ferment for five or six days, with the top lidded with leaves; when there is a smell like a fowl-house that badly needs cleaning they know that it is ready. *Landa* has to be provided in large quantities for all the guests at a wedding, when open house is kept; all present at funeral ceremonies need it, and some is poured over the menhir erected in the name of the dead man at the *Urashal*; it is given to all who have worked on a new tank at the completion ceremony; a *handi* full is carried by a lad's father and party when going to ask a man for his daughter as wife for the lad; on the sixth day after a child is born *landa* is given to the man and woman called from each house for the naming; at sowing, reaping, threshing and ploughing a little is given to every helper; and at each *pandum* each household makes and consumes some. At the Kuram Pandum, when the new *kutki* is eaten, the *landa* should be made from new *kutki*.

273 There is said to be some creeper from the flowers or sap of which an intoxicating liquor is made by the Bison-horn Marias in the Sukma zamindari, below the Tulsidongri mountains; of this no proof was forthcoming. Possibly the rumour referred to the known habit of the Marias drinking the sap of the wild vine *Vitis repanda* as a substitute for water. Otherwise water is their sole other drink, always from clear running streams, save in the dry southern fringes of the Bison-horn country in Konta tahsil.

271 **Other drinks**

271 The Hill Maria and the Bison-horn drink after meals. The latter drinks in the normal Indian way, and often from a brass *lota*, or at least a leaf-cup. The former, however, in the remoter villages still almost steals to the edge of the stream like a shy animal, kneels down, and puts his mouth to the water. Otherwise he stands in the water and scoops up water into his mouth with rapid moves of alternate hands.

Drinking

273 When Bison-horn Marias drink *mahua* spirit, either the head of the family, in case of domestic ceremonies, or every drinker in general drinking bouts, before drinking pours a drop or two on the ground in the name of the Departed. Hill Marias follow the same practice in general drinking bouts, but the libation may be made before or after drinking. The liquor is brought in large earthen pots or in gourd bottles from the nearest liquor-shop. Hill Marias fill large leaf-cups from it, which they take round to all present and from them fill the small leaf-cups which each person has ready for himself; the Bison-horn Maria doles out his liquor either with the

[169]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

372 his *kanda* by the sharp edge between their hands across the split in the ' hearth ' and at right angles to the ' hearth ', rapidly increasing the speed of his sawing; this friction soon engenders smoke and a spark, which falls through the ' hearth ' on to the little heap of inflammable bamboo sawdust that has fallen with the sawing on to the dead leaves or rag. Sawing is at once stopped, and the ' hearth ' lifted off the sawdust with great care by the kneeling men, who gently blow on the spark till it spreads and kindles the sawdust, when they fold the leaves carefully over sawdust and sparks and take the packet off to the place where a fire is to be lit, kindling first heaps of dry grass, and with this small sticks and finally logs. They are very quick in the process. I introduced a race in the tribal sports at the Maharani Sahiba's Dasehra celebrations, in which teams of three had to run fifty yards, make fire, and run with it another fifty yards to kindle a bonfire; and Hill Maria teams invariably won; the timing of the whole process, from the start till the bonfire was well alight, was eighty-seven seconds. In the [177] Muria and some Bison-horn Maria tracts the use of matches is coming in.

There appears to be no ritual occasion on which fire has to be kindled in this way. The first pile of dry wood at the firing of the *penda* fields, and the fires for cooking sacrificial meals, are kindled [179] from a burning log brought from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyep-gaita's* or *penna's* house.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

field, the *perma* bringing a cock and a little milk and husked rice. The *perma* cleans a small rectangle at the foot of the tree, sets the egg upright on it, and strews the rice in front of the egg. The cock is set down on its feet, and as soon as it pecks up a grain or two of the rice, the *perma* cuts its throat in the name of the Village Mother, whom he prays to accept the egg and the cock offered by the village, and to bless them with a bumper crop of *mahua* flowers and fruit. He then pours milk over the trunk of the tree and some of the clusters of *mahua* flowers, and prays to the milk-spirits Pal-mu'ito and Pal-mutta'i (Milk-old-man and Milk-old-woman) to shower upon them *mahua* flowers fat with milk. Next he throws the egg over the tree, calling on Nus-mu'ito and Nus-muttai (Insect-old-man and Insect-old-woman; *nus* is a grub or insect that attacks the ends of the twigs from which burst the *mahua* flowers) not to damage the flowers. Then all the men present quickly gather up dead *mahua* leaves lying around beneath the tree and put them into the baskets that they use for collecting *mahua* flowers, pretending that they are flowers; the idea, of course, is to act the gathering of a crop of flowers as thick as the carpet of dead leaves, and to persuade the trees in sympathy with this magic to yield a generous crop. The *perma* then takes the sacrificed cock as his portion, and all disperse to their homes. Before this ceremony has been held it is taboo to collect *mahua* flowers.

The Marka Pandum

The mango first-fruits ceremony is held generally a little later, in March, the *perma* convening a similar meeting of the elders to fix the day as soon as he sees that the young fruit has formed on the trees, and to arrange either for a *sari-bori* village subscription for buying the sacrificial victims or for getting the victims from those whose turn it is to give them at this *pandum*. We have seen already (pp. 165-6) that this is sometimes preceded by a ceremonial fishing beat or *weta*, and by pouring of water in the name of the Departed. All the males of the village assemble on the morning of the *pandum* by the *perma's kadri-bera* field, the head of each family bringing a pig or a cock, a pot of *landa* or *mahua* spirit, cooking pots, and a pound of husked rice or *kulthi* for each member of his family present. For this festival sometimes instead of using the *kadri-bera* field they resort to a mango grove, a grove of trees by a stream, or a clump of forest trees thickly covered with creepers, often on a hill-top, and known as a *deo-kot*; the site is always reserved for such ceremonies, and it is taboo to pluck even a leaf in them. There should be a sacred *saja* tree there. At the foot of this tree a space is cleaned and smeared with cow-dung and water, over which a table-stone is set up on three or four small stones, to serve as the *gadi* or throne

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hara Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *kortam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

perma with three or four mediums officiating at the former, and the priest of Mata (*Mata-pujari*) at the latter. In some villages there is a separate hut close to the shrine (*pen-rawar*) of the log-god or clan-god and to the *Mataguri*, and a separate priest of the Departed called generally *Pitar-gaita*, but sometimes *Dhuma-gaita* or *Hanal-gaita*, the use of the Hindu term *pitar* for the local terms *dhuma* and *hanal* being significant of the way in which Hinduism is gradually modifying tribal religion. At the Ghotpal Kurum Pandum, for example, on the 9th September 1930, the men assembled with the *perma* outside the *pen-rawar* of Use Modia Pen along with the men of two adjacent Lekami villages. The *pen* log-god was brought out and set down on four stone slabs set up as posts. The proceedings started with the *Pitar-gaita* bringing two new earthen pots and about half a pound each of new *chikma* and new mountain rice to a separate shed at the side of the *pen-rawar*. He kindled a fire, and in one pot cooked small quantities of the new *chikma*, set this out on three *mahua* leaves as an offering to the Departed, and attached a fringe of rice plants in ear to the roof of the shed. He then started to cook the rest of the new *chikma* and new rice in the other pot, sitting in the shed, while the others present went to attend the sacrifices in front of the log-god. These were conducted in much the same way as those already described as made usually before the Village Mother; but there was no sprinkling of blood on *saja* leaves or burial of the leaves in the fields, the *perma*, who acted as clan-priest, washed the mouths and feet of the pigs and cocks before applying the *tokana* test, and a *wadde* medium sat by the side of the log-god reciting '*mantram*' as the *perma* sacrificed each cock and pig. The *perma* then poured three libations each of *mahua* spirit and *landa* in front of the log-god. All the men then returned to the *Pitar-gaita's* shed, and sat in a circle round it, while the *Pitar-gaita* stuck a pinch of the cooked *chikma* and rice on the centre of each man's forehead, just as Hindus apply the *tika*. Thereafter all went back to the *pen-rawar*, and first the *perma*, then the *Pitar-gaita*, then the *peda* headmen of the three villages taking part in the ceremony, and last eleven or twelve village elders saluted everyone present and drank a leaf-cupful first of *mahua* spirit and then of *landa*. Then the sacrificed cocks and pigs were cooked, and all the men sat in a circle and were given each two leaf-cupfuls of *landa* to drink and two pieces of the cooked meat. All ended by drinking some *mahua* spirit and the whole feast was over by 9 p.m., when they dispersed to their houses without dancing. No females had been present. They had the usual family new-eating next day, with offerings to the Departed inside the house. Ghotpal and some other villages have no dancing at this *pandum*.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

796 Nowhere, so far as can be ascertained, are any offerings made at the *uraskal* menhir stones for the Departed.

After this *pandum* everyone is free to eat the new early millets and garden vegetables other than gourds, cucumbers, beans and pulses. The practice as to mountain rice varies, for there is still the Korta Pandum or rice first-fruits ceremony to follow. In some places people are free to use and cook the new mountain rice in any way they like after the Kurum Pandum. In others it must be cooked or roasted without being first washed in water until the Nuka Nordana Pandum has been held, which coincides roughly with Diwali.

The Korta Pandum

The Korta Pandum comes about a month after the Kurum Pandum, and celebrates the first eating of the new rice of the main crop, and of new cucumbers, pumpkins and gourds. Unlike the Kurum Pandum, it is a purely domestic ceremony with no public offerings, though the date for it is fixed for the whole village by the usual elders' meeting. It takes place in the first or second week of Kuar, i.e. in early October. Before dawn of the day before the festival the head of each family tries to get to his fields without being seen and reaps enough of the new rice for the morrow's ceremony, for which it is threshed, parched, husked and winnowed in readiness. *Landa* is prepared, and *mahua* spirit bought. On the appointed morning the new [769] rice is cooked in the Pot of the Departed by the housewife, along with the flesh of the goat, cock or pig sacrificed to the Departed by the head of each family, and eaten by the men and women of the family (affines being excluded) in the way already described for the domestic ceremony of the Kurum Pandum. All take *landa* and liquor, and then in most villages the men don their dancing head-dresses, and sing and dance from house to house, exchanging visits and drinking *landa* with all their neighbours. There are the usual remains-eating feasts given next day for brother-clan and wife-clan relatives from other villages, with more singing and dancing.

The Nuka Nordana Pandum

The literal meaning of '*nuka nordana*' is 'husked-grain (*indica, chanwal*) grinding'. The festival is not universal among the Bison-horn Marias, and is held at about the beginning of the third week of Kartik month (November). It is sometimes spoken of as Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights; but no Maria houses are illuminated for it. Other local names are Pit Phorni (Halbi) and Deuthni. The ceremony should be held before the clan-god or log-god, but in villages where there is none it takes place in the *kadri-bera* by the usual Bhimul post, and, as for the Marka Pandum,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *perma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kulthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Dorla border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

The Kare Pandum

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Wata* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *melo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kadri-bera*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *perma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

I: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Chapter XII

The Cult of the Departed; Magic and Witchcraft; Omens; Beliefs about the Phenomena of Nature

A. The Cult of the Departed

169

In the preceding chapters there have been many references to the *Hanal* or Departed. In Chapter VI were described the *lonu*[1] or Room of the Departed in the Hill Maria house, with the Pot of the Departed and the Hearth of the Departed, and the corresponding *wijjalon*[2] room in the Bison-horn Maria house; in Chapter VII the reader will have seen how the Departed are regarded by the Hill Maria as having the power to influence sowing and harvesting, and are therefore propitiated at seed-time by the *wijj-akk*[3] or 'seed-leaves' ceremony and at the new-eating festivals[4] by the wives offering the new grains before the Pot of the Departed after cooking them on the Hearth of the Departed, and by the husband in the morning depositing three leaves with the new food by the roadside as offerings to them. Of all Marias Chapter VIII[5] has told of the universal practice of pouring a drop or two of intoxicating drink as a libation to the Departed before drinking, and Chapter IX[6] of a burning log from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyeq-gaita's* or *perma's* house being used to fire the first pile of dry wood for *penda* cultivation and to light the fires for cooking sacrificial meals. We have seen also in the last chapter how the Bison-horn Maria (*a*) offers water to the Departed at the time of the Marka Pandum[7]; (*b*) has the new grain and vegetables cooked in the Pot of the Departed by his wife and sacrifices cocks or other victims to them in the domestic ceremonies in connexion with the Kurum Pandum,[8] (*c*) the Korta Pandum[9] and (*d*) the Jata Pandum[10]; (*e*) has in some villages a separate priest of the Departed known as the Pitar-Gaita[11] or Hanal-Gaita who has special duties to perform at the public ceremonies of the Kurum Pandum (possibly at other *pandum* also, but no enquiry was made on this point); and (*f*) at the weaning ceremony at the Jata Pandum[12] makes his children eat as their

[1] See p. 114.
[2] See p. 123.
[3] See p. 133.
[4] See p. 139.
[5] See p. 170.
[6] See p. 190.
[7] See p. 209; cf. also pp. 165-6.
[8] See p. 216.
[9] See p. 218.
[10] See p. 219.
[11] See p. 217.
[12] See p. 219.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

first solid food the new grain and meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed. 769 ●

It will be seen in the sections of the next part of this book that deal with birth, marriage and funeral customs that there are further rites, either indicating the power of the Departed to influence the fortunes of their posterity, or designed to propitiate them. Such are the searching of the body of a new-born baby for the birth-marks of some ancestor; the libations to the Departed in the betrothal and marriage ceremonies of all Marias and the sacrificial meal given to Bison-horn bride and bridegroom before the Pot of the Departed in the bridegroom's father's house; the ascertaining at Hill Maria funerals whether the death was due to the wrath of the Departed; the special precautions taken in the obsequies of persons killed by tigers or lightning, victims of small-pox and pregnant women; and in Hill and Bison-horn obsequies the attempt finally to lay or placate the Departed by the erection of a menhir in the *kotokal* or *uraskal*.

The word *kanal* is simply a past participial form of the verb *kandana*, 'to go'; 'Departed' is thus a literal translation. It has a sound of finality about it, as though the dead, once departed, were finished with; and indeed men of the hill clans that do not erect menhirs for the dead are apt to assert that this is the case, and that they never worry further about their dead after they have been cremated or buried. Yet there are many signs that even they do not really think so. All Marias, it has already been observed,[1] are shy of talking about the Departed, though it takes little to get them to discuss other religious beliefs and ceremonies. I have had Hill Marias denying that they do anything for the Departed or offer them anything at death or the new-eating festivals, and then either found at their new graves a wooden *kanal-gutta* post and a stone *kanal-garya* seat for the Departed, with a sacrificed cow's tail and foot hanging from a tree close by, or discovered a Pot and Hearth of the Departed in their *lonu*. There is almost certainly not a Maria who does not believe that for some time, at least, after their death the Departed are to be feared and appeased by the necessary offerings and memorials. [764]

This fear of the *kanal* as likely to cause illness, death, the attacks of tigers or famine (for it is these apprehensions that lie behind most of the observances catalogued in the first two paragraphs of this chapter) may operate also not to the alarm of the righteous only, but as a protection to him because of its efficacy in deterring others from offences against the house. Goods stored in the *lonu* of the Hill Marias and the *wijja-lon* of the Bison-horn

[1] See p. 195.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotohal* or *uraskal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

584 contract; they therefore attach less importance to the consent of the girl, and even if a father or his son agree to the *gudapal* girl marrying some other husband, the latter has to compensate the *gudapal* cousin. If a girl's father raises objections to the proposed match, whether a *gudapal* match or not, bitter quarrels often follow; but generally the boy and girl have learnt their own minds before this first formal demand for the girl (*talpana* in the Bison-horn dialect), or there has been previous informal discussion between the two families. Normally, therefore, the youth and girl both being mature, the girl's father gladly agrees to give his girl, and then the youth's father gives him the *paili* of rice and the large and the small pots of *mahua* liquor. The girl's father takes the small pot into the *narma-lon* room of his house, and pours a small quantity on the [769] ground in front of the Pot of the Departed as a libation, the rest being drunk by him and the members of his family. The liquor in the large pot is divided among the relatives and friends of both families who have come to witness the *talpana*, and all disperse except the youth's father and his companions; the rice which he has brought is cooked and served to them and the girl's family. Her father then invites the youth's father to come again for the formal declaration of the betrothal to all his relatives and friends from near and far. The visitors then return to their village.

Some time later the father of the youth in consultation with [787] his friends, and often with the aid of a medium, fixes a day for this second visit, and sends word to the girl's father in good time for him to invite all his relatives and friends. This time he and his party take with them a small pig, two *paili* of rice, a very large pot of *landa* and a large and a small pot of *mahua* spirit. On arrival at the girl's house they are greeted by her father and the assembled guests, and the former announces the betrothal to the company and asks for their formal approval. This given, the girl's father as [769] before pours a libation to the Departed from the small pot of *mahua*, and he and his household drink the rest of its contents. The large pots of *landa* and *mahua* spirit are consumed by all the assembled guests, *barbatti* beans being fried by the girl's mother and served along with the *landa*; and the rice and pork are cooked and served to all present. All then go.

Yet a third preliminary visit to the girl's father follows, the date being arranged as before by the youth's father, and word being sent to the girl's father. This time the former and his party take and deliver to the latter two large pots of *landa*, two large and one small pots of *mahua* spirit, five *paili* of rice or *kuthi*, and a large pig. The youth's father tells the girl's father that he intends to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

585 There is now no obstacle to the wedding. The appointed day may be any auspicious day in the year, chosen in the manner explained in the section on omens; but in practice almost all weddings take place in the early hot weather, as among the Hill Marias. I will first give a general outline of the wedding procedure, and then reproduce, with some revisions, an account of an actual wedding which I saw at Ganjenar and Massenar between Dantewara and Kuakonda in May 1930; the account has already been published in the *Central Provinces Census Report*, 1931.

On the afternoon of the wedding day the bridegroom, his parents and many relatives of both sexes proceed to the girl's father's house with the agreed bride-price. On arrival the bridegroom's father delivers the bride-price to the bride's father, the cloth for her mother being placed on top of one of the large pots of *landa*, and asks him to hand the bride over. In response the [769] bride's father takes up the small pot of *mahua* spirit, and after the usual libation to his Departed in his *narma-lon* room drinks a little spirit and gives the rest to the members of the household. *Landa* is then taken from one of the pots brought as bride-price and from one of those provided by the bride's father, and distributed to all the guests present, both from the bridegroom's and the bride's villages and clans. Meanwhile the bride is bathed at the nearest pool by women relatives, and a bevy of the women of her village and clan keep up a constant chorus of song, to the occasional beating of drums. After the bride's father has entertained all present of both parties to the *suttam-jawa* or relatives' dinner, consisting of grain and the flesh of the pig brought as part of the bride-price, the girl is brought out by her father or brother towards dusk, and handed over to the bridegroom, their hands being joined and rings exchanged. The senior woman relative of the family takes up the cloth brought for the bride's mother, and wraps it round her, while a male member of the family hands the bridegroom's father a hind-leg of the bride-price pig, to be taken to his village to feed the bridegroom and bride and the bridegroom's family. The bridegroom's party then escort the bridegroom and bride with the bride's going-away presents to the bridegroom's village, accompanied by the girl's relatives and fellow-villagers. Special booths are prepared at this village for the bride's relatives. On arrival, the bride and bridegroom are taken into his father's house to the Place of the Departed in his *narma-lon* room and seated there with the father, brothers and mother of the bridegroom; they eat the hind-leg of pork brought from the bride's house after it has been cooked on the Hearth of the Departed. Meanwhile the other guests sit down to pork and rice cooked separately outside the

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

165 work in this period. Often a house or a portion of a house in which a death has occurred is shut up and not re-occupied. It is, however, not repaired. So long as it stands, it is regarded as a memorial of the dead. On the day after the funeral, if the house is still to be occupied, the rooms and the surroundings are cleaned out, and the floors are re-plastered. On the first three mornings after the [769] funeral they place a little meal from the Pot of the Departed on the grave as an offering. At the end of the period of mourning 764 the heir, if rich enough, should proceed at once to set up a menhir to the dead in the *kotokal*, in the *parganas* and villages where these menhirs are still erected. If, however, he cannot yet afford to do so, he goes to the graveside, bows before the *kanal-garya* cromlech, tells the dead man's *kanal* that he is sorry that he cannot yet afford to erect his stone, and begs him to be patient, to forgive him for the delay and not to harass him. It may take him two or three years to collect the necessary grain and money for feeding those who are to help him to find and erect a suitable menhir. In many parts of the hills the custom has fallen into disuse, because of its cost. But it is still common on the Kutru side of the hills, in Tulagotal, Hukkagotal, Farsigotal, Farsal, Bardal, Tapalibhum, Padalibhum, Nurbhum, Behramar and Sonpur *parganas*, and also prevails in Dugal and other neighbouring Jhoria Muria *parganas*. In Chhota Dongar *pargana* few clans now erect either *marma-kal* or *kotokal* stones, though in many villages old rows of *kotokal* menhirs attest the former prevalence of the practice; the Bokalur are almost the only clan there who still erect them. From Adeq in that *pargana* rows of menhirs will be met by the traveller at Itulnar in Bhairamgarh Mar, between Itulnar and Hikul in Barsur Mar, and at Toinar and other villages in the latter *pargana*; but the clans now occupying these areas do not erect menhirs, and say that the rows still standing were erected ages ago by clans no longer known, though the Gumelor attribute the menhirs in their village of Toinar to the long extinct Timor clan. The Tamor of Tumirgunda between Handawada and the Indrawati have a *kotokal* on the hill path to Hirameta, but have erected no new menhir there for years, and say that nowadays no stone is set up till three generations have elapsed after death; they admit that this is practically a confession that the practice has been abandoned, and say that it was found to be too expensive.

When, however, the heir has enough grain and money to pay for the food and drink needed for the erection of a menhir, whether on the fourth day after death, or after the lapse of some months or years, he calls together his relatives and friends, and all go off into the forest to look for a suitable stone. The only consideration

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

guiding their choice is the adequacy of their resources to provide food and drink for the men required to drag or carry the stone. The menhirs in the Abujhmar country and the adjacent Muria tracts are considerably smaller than the vast menhirs sometimes met in the Bison-horn country; the largest that I have seen, at Lakka in Kutru Mar, were just over 8 feet high, and about 2½ feet wide by 10 inches thick at the base. They drag out the selected stone from its resting-place, and place under it several cross-pieces of wood, and on each side of it a long thick pole, to which the cross-pieces are lashed. The stone is then lashed to the cross-pieces, and the poles are lifted on to the shoulders of the bearers, from twenty to thirty in number, and so the journey to the *kotokal* begins. At intervals they stop, and are given by the heir drinks of *mahua* spirit, which is considered to give them strength to bear the burden; and they are given at least one meal on the way. There will also be reserves of bearers, who carry the food and drink and cooking pots, to be entertained. So they ultimately reach the *kotokal* and deposit the stone on the ground at the appointed spot. If it is too late to erect it that evening, a feast follows at the heir's house, and all night the men and women dance with their wife-clan (*akomama*) relatives. In the following afternoon the stone is erected under the supervision of the *erramlogh* or the senior wife-clan relative present. A hole is dug in the ground at one end of the stone and then the stone, if small, is pulled upright by willing hands and held there while the earth is shovelled in. If it is large and heavy, ropes are lashed round the far end and used to pull it upright, with its base in the hole, and ten men or so hold poles on both sides of its apex to prevent it falling over, while others ram small stones, earth and turves around its base. In Kutru Mar, Chhota Dongar Mar, Behramar, Tapalibhum and Sonpur Mar a *kanal-garya* cromlech is then made at the base of the menhir, and the heir of the dead man comes up to it, and squats on the ground with his back to the menhir and the cromlech. He takes an eight or nine days old chicken, and, holding it behind his back and never looking at the stone, cuts its throat with the nails of his hand, sprinkles its blood on the table-stone of the cromlech, and pushes its body under the table-stone; next he places an offering of rice or *kuthi* grain on the table-stone. As he makes the offerings he speaks to the dead man, saying, 'Whether you were killed by magic, or by the wrath of the clan-god and the Departed, or died naturally, I know not. But now I have put up this menhir for you, and you must wander no more. Stay here in peace for ever, and do not worry us your descendants.' In Tapalibhum and Behramar they erect the stone and sacrifice the chicken in silence. Only the heir has to keep his

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

764 back to the menhir; all others present may watch the whole proceedings. In Padalibhum and parts of Nurbhum they do not sacrifice a chicken, but only place an offering of grain on the cromlech. In Farsal, Bardal and the three Gotal *parganas* they then usually kill a boar a few yards away from the menhir, stretching it out on its stomach, two men holding it down with a pole across its neck, while a third man kills it with blows from the blunt side of the axe-head. They boil and eat the pork there, men, women and children, but give no part of it to the *hanal* and do not even hang its tail over the top of the menhir. In these *parganas* they assert that they have given up sacrificing a cow after the erection of the menhir; but I should be surprised if this assertion were strictly true. A similar claim was made by the Padali headmen of Padalibhum, but Bardal Gille, the headman of Rawan in that *pargana*, stated that some clans still offered a cow and hung its tail from the menhir. There is still a fear of offending Hindu State officials by frankly admitting the slaughter of cows. Cow sacrifice is further limited by the comparative scarcity of cattle in many parts of the Abujhmar hills, whereas pigs are plentiful. Even where they assert that they no longer sacrifice cows they do not scruple to eat the flesh of a cow that has died a natural death or been killed by a tiger.

In Kutru Mar they do not erect stones brought to the *kotokal* for women and children, but leave them flat on the ground. The stones for women and children, whether erected or prone, are always smaller than those erected for men. There is a general belief that menhirs increase or decrease in size according to the *hanal* is satisfied or not.[1]

769 After the chicken and grain have been offered on the cromlech at the foot of the menhir, the heir, still turning his back on the menhir, goes off at once to the nearest pool of water, followed by the others present, and all wash their arms and legs and return to the village. Where cow sacrifice is still in vogue, as in Tapalibhum, Behramar and Sonpur Mar *parganas*, the *erramtogh* then sacrifices a cow or a pig or both, generally in the *lonu* room of the heir's house before the Pot of the Departed, using the blunt side of the axe-head, saying to the dead man, '*Niwa naode mat haukin torun. Idek mak suk-duk kemek manu*', or, 'I sacrifice this in your name; hereafter keep still and do not make trouble for us!' The tuft at the end of the cow's tail is fastened to a loop of cord, and hung over the apex of the menhir just erected. The heir then entertains all who have assembled to a second dinner, off the sacrificed beef and pork, and the night ends in dancing and liquor. Needless to say, this procedure is costly, and many a *hanal* has to rest content with a *marma-kal* cairn.

[1] [See cat. 116, p. 423. – Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

Where, as in Orcha and most of the surrounding villages of the Chhota Dongar *pargana*, *kotokal* menhirs are no longer erected, a cow or pig is nevertheless sacrificed in this way in the village on the night after the funeral at the heir's house, and portions of the flesh or the liver when cooked are placed under the cromlech at the base of the *hanal-gutta* post, or, if there is no cromlech, on the grave, while the tail, and sometimes also a lower leg, from hock to hoof, are fastened by a cord from an overhanging *saja* bough. The usual feast and dance then follow.

One reason for the abandonment of the custom of erecting menhirs may be that the clans which have abandoned it have in fairly recent times abandoned their traditional for their present clan-areas; for it was the rule that the menhir should always be erected in the village from which the dead man or his ancestors had originally come, not in the village at which he was living at the time of his death.

A person who has killed himself, or who dies from cholera or small-pox, is not buried or cremated at the regular funeral ground, but in the forest at some distance from it. There had been no recent case in any village which I visited of a woman dying when pregnant or in child-birth, and no one could say what would be done in such a case. Persons killed by tigers or other wild animals must be burned, not buried, at the place where their remains are found, or to which they are brought for the inquest. They must never be brought into a village, for otherwise the dead man's *hanal* may bring the tiger there. The remains, if scattered, are collected and placed in a cloth brought from the dead man's house; but such bodies should be touched as little as possible. Logs are piled under the body where it lies and kindled, and anything found with the body or at the place where the tiger attacked the dead man is burnt with it; but no dancing dresses or other property are brought from his house to be burned with him, and no offerings of grain or *mahua* spirit are made at the grave. No *marma-kal* cairn and no *kotokal* menhir are set up for him; but there is nothing to prevent this being done for the victims of cholera or smallpox.

Treatment of abnormal deaths

B. Bison-horn Marias

The true Bison-horn Marias, as distinguished from members of clans once Hill Maria in culture but now adopting Bison-horn customs, cremate all their dead except those who die from abnormal causes. When a man dies, his son-in-law is sent for, and on arrival climbs on to the roof of the house with a *dol* drum, which he beats

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a woman at this time. At the menarche (for which the word used is *kumer utta*, 'the blossoming of the flower'), however, a special hut is built for the girl by women outside the village. A woman of the household brings her food and sleeps with her at night; she must bathe whenever she returns to the house. In some villages, the Marias still make a platform up a tree for the girl, who during the day must hide herself in the forest.

It is very dangerous for anyone to see, let alone to touch, a girl at her menarche. At Tikanpal I was told that if a man saw such a girl as he went through the jungle he should slap her and then go to her parents and after rebuking them, demand a fowl which he should sacrifice; then he should bathe and anoint himself with oil. At Gadapal they said that a man should throw a lump of earth between his legs at the girl, or a stick over his shoulder, and then go home and bathe. Neglect of these precautions might lead to blindness.

At the end of the period—all this refers only to the first period—the girl destroys her hut or platform during the night, throws away her cloth,[1] bathes and returns home before cockcrow. In some villages she is expected to remain for a day or two longer on the veranda of her house: if she has a married elder brother, it is the special duty of his wife to attend to her. Then she puts oil and turmeric on her body—an act which is said to symbolize her formal re-admission into caste, for during the previous days she has been regarded as excommunicated. In many Maria villages, however, the ceremonial use of turmeric is still unknown, and the elder brother's wife carries a pot of water round the house and sprinkles everyone saying, 'Now you are back again in caste'. After this the girl fetches water in an earthen pot and cowdungs the floor. In the evening her father invites some of the elders to a bottle of liquor and says, 'My daughter who was unclean all these days is now clean again'. He sacrifices a fowl to the Departed and they feast on its flesh.

There is not nearly so much fuss about the later periods. The woman has to keep out of the way, but there is no danger in looking at her, and when it is over she just has a bath and resumes her ordinary duties. But even so her daily programme is considerably disturbed. She must not sleep inside the house and, of course, sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden. She must not cook or fetch water or go to work in the fields. She must not touch cattle, pigs

[1] There do not seem to be any special taboos associated with this cloth. But the leaf-cups from which the girl eats at this time are charged with magical potency and if a witch can get hold of them she can afflict the girl with palsy.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER TWO

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

I. The Muria Village

BEFORE approaching the main subject of this book, it is necessary to see how the chelik and motiari live at home. In a sense, there is no such thing as a typical Muria village any more than there is a typical Muria house. But most of the villages conform to the Gond pattern: they are set among trees—the Muria seem fonder of shade than wind and do not often choose the hill-tops beloved of the Maria and Baiga—and each house is enclosed within a separate fence that also surrounds its garden. There is thus a sharp distinction between a Muria and a Hill Maria village: the latter, like the Baiga village, consists of a row of houses joined together and opening on to a common street. Traces of this survive among the Muria in the enclosures of some of their leading men; at Markabera, for example, the headman's house is like a little village, a long enclosure with a small street on to which face many dwelling-places and granaries. In Palli-Barkot, and other western villages also, groups of related families build their houses to open round a square.

But generally the houses are scattered about, sometimes widely scattered, to suit the lie of the land and the dimensions of the gardens, and a street connects them with each other. There is no sociological significance in the layout of the village; neither the headman's nor the priest's houses nor the ghotul are ever in a special or recognized position.

The houses, nearly always two or three in number round a small courtyard, are built of timber or bamboo plastered with mud and have thatched roofs. As we move east we find the verandahs getting deeper and deeper until in the east of Kondagaon the verandah of the main house is often deeper than the room inside. Where houses are built like this, there is no need for special menstruation huts, which are indeed only to be found in the west in the neighbourhood of the Abujhmar, where there is no room to seclude a woman on the small verandahs.

To visit a Muria village is to receive a general impression of tidiness and cleanness, careful industry that exploits to the full the gifts of Mother Earth, and a love of animals. The pigsties are substantial, often with a double roof; the cattle-sheds are sometimes raised on pillars; sitting hens are given comfortable nests raised well above the ground. The houses themselves are cosy and homely, crammed with every sort of basket, leaf-bundle and utensil. Fish-traps, drums, wooden clogs hang from the roof, and flutes and bows and arrows are stuck under the thatch. Inside, in an inner room, is kept the mysterious Pot of the Departed where the family's ancestors are tended and placated.

These houses are the work-rooms of the chelik and motiari; they are the homes only of the married. The life and interest of chelik and motiari centre in the ghotul. But life there is definitely regarded as a preparation and training for the home. Those who live well and work hard in the dormitories will be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers later on.

Most of the Muria are undoubtedly very poor. I was one day discussing with W. V. Grigson, who had visited Mandla after several years in Bastar, whether the Bastar villagers were poorer than those in the Central Provinces. I suggested—and he agreed—that probably the Bastar villagers were actually poorer, but that their lives were so much richer that they seemed far more

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXI

764
769

The dead man's daughter-in-law throws rice over the bier

Memorial menhirs near Khutgaon

[p. 144 (N)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769
292
535

Plate XXXII

[p. 144 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXIII

769
292
535

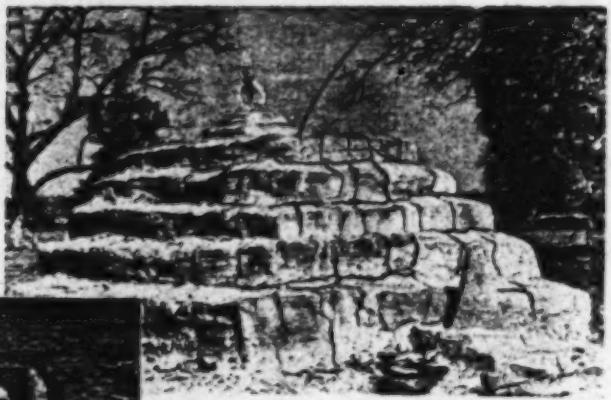
Scenes from the Dance of the Ghost

[p. 144 (E)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate XXXIV

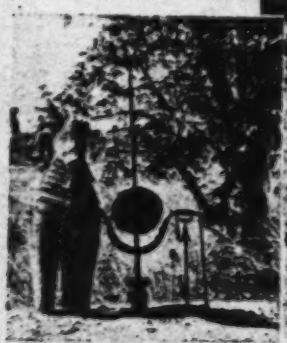
764
769



Tomb at Gudripara

Small menhir in front of the Gudripara tomb

Son and grandson offer liquor at a father's tomb at Phunder



[p. 144 (D)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

means of a silken thread let down from above. The daughters of Mahapurub slide down this thread when they visit the world to dance; heroes whose brides have been carried away to the Upper World swarm boldly up it. In at least one tale a god, Bhimul Pen, goes to the Under World to dig for roots.

But as Porrobhum is not a heaven where the good are rewarded, so in genuine Muria thought Adibhum is not regarded as a place of punishment for departed sinners. It is occupied by ogres, Dano and Rakshasa; it is an arena for high adventure rather than a place of punishment. Grigson, very properly, mocks at Russell and Hiralal's statement that the Bastar Gond have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers' who are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any salphi trees' implying that their 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'.[1] I do not agree, however, that this suggestion 'emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts'.[2] The idea is entirely in character; it is just the sort of thing that a Muria who had heard of hell and retribution might have evolved.

The completeness of the divorce between the fate of the dead and any kind of moral retribution is shown clearly in Muria ideas about what happens to a woman who dies in pregnancy or child-birth. The purest and sweetest girl who meets with this unhappy fate is condemned to turn into a horrible succuba until after a few years she passes to Rakasgarh, the land of ogresses, though some treacherous villain hanged in jail may be given every honour after death.

IV. The Intervention of the Departed in Human Affairs

But wherever they may be, the Departed are believed to be vitally interested in human affairs. They are naturally conservative and are particularly interested in maintaining the laws and customs of their tribe. Any breach of the taboos relating to women is specially hateful to them. Adultery is punished, according to Muria opinion, by some form of dropsy which is brought upon the offenders by the Departed, to whom elaborate offerings must be made before a cure can be effected. So also in a case of murder or grievous hurt peace can only be made between the two families if peace is made first between their ancestors. The ceremonial hunt can be ruined by the indignant dead if a woman in the absence of her husband commits adultery with another man.

The Muria like to associate the dead in all those activities which are dearest to them. At harvest time, when grain is taken to the thrashing-floor they throw a little to one side, and later collect and eat it, in honour of the dead. Before they drink they generally pour on to the ground a few drops of liquor for the earth and the ancestors. At every turn of human life, at every prayer that is offered and every ceremony that is performed, the dead are invoked. They are implored to protect the new-born child, to bless and make fertile the marriage-bed, to guarantee the children's dormitory, to save the village from wild beasts, to keep famine far away, to ensure a plentiful rainfall, to make the crops rich and punctual, to bring success in hunting or fishing, to save the honey-gatherer from the sting of bees, to guide the falcon

[1] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 96.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 224. 'I have never been able', says Ward (1870), 'to find that the Gonds have any real theory as regards an after life, or the transubstantiation of the soul. They seem to consider that man is born to live a certain number of years on the earth and having fulfilled his time, to disappear.'—Ward, op. cit., p. 141.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

to its prey, to protect the boys and girls going out on dancing expeditions, to ensure that the drum gives its accustomed thunder. Life and death are thus united by these beliefs and rites, and the whole of existence is seen as a single sequence where physical death is but an incident which in no way disturbs the continuity of interest or relationship.

V. Funerary Rites

In the west, Muria death customs are dominated by Hill Maria influence. In Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria said that their funerary rites were 'things of the Maria Raj'. As we move east, where the Muria population probably represents an earlier Gond immigration from the north, customs are not unlike those typical of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The north-east of Bastar, however, has been more open to Hindu influence and it is not always easy to tell what the original traditions were.

The Muria bury important people, little children, chelik and motiari, and the victims of small-pox. They cremate all others. They lay the corpse, whether of man or woman, on its back with the head to the east. At Padbera, the Gaita said, 'It is because we came from the east. East is "up" and west is "down" '.

Members of each clan and either sex are disposed in separate places. Those who die from unusual causes are taken far away into the jungle. In Palari I was told that the remains of a tiger's victim should be burnt on the actual scene of death. Usually the corpse is placed under a mahua tree.

I will first describe one of the several funerals that I have witnessed, and then give any variations that I have recorded elsewhere.

On the night of 8 December 1940, in Bauri, a village of the Abujhmar foothills, a woman of about forty years named Dhako, the wife of Genjru of the Wadder clan, died and was carried home on a rough litter to her husband's house at Amgaon. She had died of 'a watery swelling of the body', perhaps dropsy, which is generally regarded as a punishment for adultery. The people were very reticent about speaking of the cause of her death and I never was able to hear the real story.

Since it is taboo for a woman to sleep on a cot, Dhako died on the ground and was again laid on the floor of her own house covered with a sheet. Many women, assembled in the house and outside in the street, wailed loudly from time to time. Gradually the relatives gathered and, when all were there, the corpse was carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard. Six women sat round weeping. An old woman of the Wadder clan (which can marry with the Partabi clan to which the dead woman originally belonged), but not a member of the family, now tied a little rice and a cowrie in knots on either side of the cloth. There were three knots on each side joined by a thread which ran criss-cross over the body. They did not bathe the corpse nor close the eyes, but the woman's little daughter, a child about five years old, put haldi on her mother's face, and the other female relatives present did the same.

Meanwhile a group of chelik, most of whom were related to Genjru, were busy making a sort of ladder to serve as bier. This they covered with dry grass. The corpse was lifted out and placed upon it. The chelik took it on their shoulders and went into the jungle followed by both men and women. Genjru's younger sister followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice over it. Another woman carried a basket containing three different roots and bits of haldi.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

761 787 the house of a samdhi. The chickens are exchanged so that a representative of the dead person's house holds the samdhi's chicken and vice versa. The usual piles of rice are made and the chickens held before them while a string of names is recited. When the chickens peck at the rice, it is believed that they have revealed the cause of death. The chickens are then sacrificed and cooked with the rice on the spot.

It is commonly believed all over India, as by the Muria, that the way the smoke rises from the funeral pyre indicates the sort of death the deceased has suffered. If the smoke goes straight up, it indicates a natural death; if it goes crooked, it proclaims the hand of witchcraft.

VII. 'Bringing Back the Soul'

769 The curious rite of 'bringing back the soul' is known to the Hill Maria and the Bison-horn Maria, but is most common among the Muria who practise it in many different forms. Since this rite is performed throughout the Central Provinces, and since some of these Muria probably represent an ancient migration from the north into Bastar, it is not surprising that we should find this cultural link between them.[1]

It is rather difficult to describe the rites because of the bewildering variety of detail to be discovered from village to village, but it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of the main outlines.

After death, on the following day or at any time up to three years, when there is sufficient provision in the house, the relations of the dead man are summoned for a feast. Sometimes the relations are warned by a dream that the spirit of the dead is dissatisfied and that they must do something to comfort and honour him.

The people assemble, both *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relatives, and enjoy a feast in the dead man's house. The next morning they go singing, both men and women, attended by chelik and motiari with their drums and cymbals to the nearest tank or river. In some villages a samdhi makes a small booth on the bank; nine reeds are planted in the ground, mango leaves tied to them and a string run round them seven times. On the top he puts a small mat and on the ground he makes a circle with red and black powder and places an egg in the middle in the name of the Yer K[illegible]ang (the Water Maiden). The Gaita then puts three rings of aonra fibre in the circle and an earthen pot filled with water.

[1] Accounts of bringing back the soul have been given for several tribes by Russell and Hiralal, for the Gond (Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 94), Ahir (III, p. 28), Halba (III, p. 195), Kharia (III, p. 430), Kond (III, p. 469), Lohar (IV, p. 124), and Taonia (IV, 541). The practice is probably common to all the tribes in the Central Provinces. It is said that the Gond once buried their dead inside the house in order to ensure re-birth within the family; possibly 'bringing back the soul' has a similar purpose. The Gond customs recorded by Russell and Hiralal resemble those of the Muria. Others, however, differ. For example, the Kharia bring back the soul of the dead by attracting it at night to a lamp placed at a cross-roads. They sit near the lamp calling on the dead man and when the flame wavers in the wind, they break the lamp saying that the soul has returned to them. The Kond are said to have brought home the soul riding on a bow-stick covered with cloth. The Lohar have a custom, which I have myself noted for the Pando of east Bilaspur. Rice-flour is spread on the floor of the kitchen and covered with a brass plate. The mourners go to the village boundary, again spread flour on the ground, call on the dead to come and wait till some worm or insect crawls on to the flour. They catch the creature with a pinch of dough and carry it home and let it loose in the house. The flour under the brass plate is scrutinised and it is said that usually the foot-prints of a man or animal are found; this indicates the body of the man or beast to which the soul has passed.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The near relatives of the deceased then go into the water crying on the dead to come to them and try to catch any kind of living thing. Whoever first catches a fish or prawn or frog, whatever it may be, is regarded as being specially loved by the dead and is rewarded with extra drinks and small presents. They put the fish into one of the pots together with a ring. The pot is covered with a bamboo cover on which is a new sari. The *akomāma* relative applies haldi and oil to the pot and as he is doing this someone else catches hold of every member of the party in turn, both men and women, and smears their private parts with haldi-oil. Then a girl (daughter or daughter-in-law to the dead) lifts the pot, puts it on her head, carries it up to the house and puts it down near the Pot of the Departed. A samdhi sacrifices a chicken after testing it in the usual way; when the chicken eats the rice offered it is a sign that the soul of the dead man loves his family as before. Then they pour the water together with the fish and ring on to the ground and tie the ring, which represents the man's soul, from the roof above the Pot of the Departed. Sometimes the ring is tied to a broom. They hang the pot itself up to the roof of the house. They eat the sacrificed chicken and drink and dance and then disperse. A samdhi makes a mixture of the water in which rice has been cleaned, the bark of the mango tree and a little cow's milk and sprinkles the whole house in order to purify it.

Some time afterwards, at one of their clan festivals, the members of the family take either the pot or simply the ring that has been hung in the Room of the Departed to the clan shrine or Hanalkot, which must be located at the clan headquarters or at least in some village within the clan territory. In some villages, as at Gudla, this is only done for men; women stay in the house. But at Sirsi the souls of both men and women were taken to the Hanalkot. In Kerawahi they said that at the special festival for Bara Pen, which occurs every two or three years, the members of the Poyami clan take the pots in which the soul has been brought from the river along with the rings to the shrine of their clan god. They sacrifice fowls saying, 'Here is the god of Lanji-Dhamda, go to him and you will become like him. As he helps us, so you too help us'. They tie the ring to a tree overlooking the shrines and break the pot. Then after the usual feast they go home.

Sometimes, however, the people take the soul direct to the Hanal. This is a small shrine for the dead, generally under a saja tree. They put the pot containing the soul and the ring down near the tree and sacrifice two hens, one for the dead man's family and one for his *akomāma* relatives. They feed these saying, 'Have you come happily today? Don't trouble us, you are to become a god. Always help us and don't trouble us'. When the chickens eat, thus showing that the soul is pleased, a member of the family kills one chicken and a samdhi kills the other. On the place where the chickens are sacrificed, they pour out the water and soul from the pot. They tie the ring by a single thread to the tree thus 'mixing him with the dead'. Everyone who came should have brought a chicken; these are now killed with sticks and roasted. The two sacrificed chickens may only be eaten by those who killed them. They drink liquor and dance and sing, and then go dancing home.

In the Bara Dongar Pargana the Muria have a very impressive death-dance for this occasion. A man wearing a beard of bear's hair, four *gutri*[1] horns tied on his forehead, a fishing-net round his loins, a wooden doll in one hand, a bent stick in the other, leads the way from the river up to the house. In

[1] *Cervulus Muntjac*, the barking deer.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 535 front of him one samdhi carries water and another a stick. As they go along they beat the path and throw water on it saying, 'We are making a road before you, come slowly leaning on your stick; we are making a road for you, come samdhi to your house, don't stay outside'.

The bearded man, who is supposed to represent the soul of the dead, weary, hungry and exhausted comes walking slowly, bent like an aged man. Soon he falls to the ground exclaiming, 'I can go no further'. Then the samdhi says, 'You must drink this jawa-gruel' and they give him a drink of liquor and pull him up on his feet. He goes on a little more and falls on his feet again. Other people dance round him beating sticks against each other and all the people sing. He falls down again and again exclaiming that he is too weary and hungry to go further.

When they get near the house the bearded man and his two attendants roll on the ground and the family has to come out and beg them to bring the soul in. 'We will pay you your wages' they say, meaning that they will give them plenty of liquor. The daughter or sister of the deceased comes out with haldi, rice and water in a dish and washes the feet of the man who represents the soul.[1]

769 Inside the house they place a small stump, eight inches high, in the ground in the name of Bara Pen. There is a nail in the post and they hang the pot containing the fish on this and all relatives put haldi on it and offer pice to it saying, 'We have brought you here for your last marriage'. They sacrifice a cock to Bara Pen saying, 'Now keep this soul with you'.

They pour the water from the pot over the stump of the dead man, who is thus supposed to bathe in it. There is a curious idea that the fish must disappear as otherwise it will mean that the soul has not 'flown out of the pot to mingle with his ancestors'. Once when Lahari Maravi's father died, a witch kept the fish in the pot and would not let it fall out. They had to make special sacrifices before the soul was able to mingle with the Departed.

During the ceremonies of catching the soul and bringing it back to the house a number of songs are sung, of which the following are given as examples.

Song

769 539

Re re nāgo re rela !

Dāt ra dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.
Aga baga dākāt ra ?	Where are they going?
Sono rupo bandāng ra,	To the gold and silver tank,
Aga yise dātu ra.	Let us go there.
Phauj lamre mānta ra.	The whole company is going.
Agāy yise yewandur ra.	They have arrived there.
Sāt kori layor ra,	Seven score chelik,
Sāt kori layah kere ra,	Seven score motiari,
Agāy yise handur ra,	They are going there,
Bandāng jhalke māndur ra.	Where waves move the water of the tank.
Agāy yise parakandur ra.	They are searching for it.
Jiwa koji kindur ra,	They are searching for the soul,
Bagāy jiwa pudo ra.	But they cannot find it.

[1] Such dramatic rituals give some point to Ridgeway's suggestion that serious drama originated from the worship of the, often deified, dead. See Sir W. Ridgeway, *Drama and Dramatic Dances of Non-European Races* (London, 1915).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

769 ●
539

Dīda hārāl itur ra,	His brother says,
Wāy ra bābu wāyu ra.	Come, father, come.
Idām injor hatur ra	When he said this
Jiwa injor wāndu ra.	The soul came.
Dīda hārāl poyondu ra.	His brother caught it.
Dātu dādi dātu ra.	Come, brothers, let us go.

Re re nāgo re rela!

This song explains itself so clearly that no commentary is needed. It is sung by chelik and motiari while the elder people are groping about in the water trying to catch some kind of living creature. The next song also gives an exact description of the rites that accompany the return of the soul, after it has been caught, to its home.

Songs

Ange hāri nihandu ra	Daughter-in-law puts it (the soul)
Puhua tānd te irandu.	In a new pot and shuts it up.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Ange hāri indu ra,	Daughter-in-law says,
Dāyu bābu dāyu ra!	Come, brother, come!
Sāt kori layor ra,	Seven score boys,
Sāt kori layākhs ra,	Seven score girls,
Dand laure māndur ra,	They go along,
Ange hāri poyse māndur ra	Daughter-in-law carries the pot on her head.
Lone yise yewtor ra,	They reach the house,
Ghāt ghadse māndur ra.	They come outside.
Lone yise yeakun ra	When they reach the house
Agāy yise rohandu ra.	She puts down the pot.
Nātenoru saga ra,	Wife-clansmen of the village,
Bāhar tore saga ra.	Wife-clansmen from outside have come.
Samdhi saga wāsmandur ra,	The wife-clansmen have come,
Helār bhai saga wāsmandur ra.	The brother-clansmen have come.
Ore yise talkhikindu ra,	They are asking,
Jiwa muda tun talkhikindu ra.	They ask for the ring of the soul.
Jiwa muda tun poyendur ra	The relatives
Saga sana poyendu ra.	All touch the ring.
Saga sana jiwa muda tun ra	The relatives tie the ring
Kasur padiya te dohandur ra;	On a broom;
Lopāra murwis pāt te ra,	Then take the broom inside,
Agāy yise dohandur ra.	And tie it to the cross-beam.
Rend rupaiya na dārango ra:	They give two rupees for liquor:
Dārango yise tach mandur ra.	They give liquor to all.
Saga sana tun kindur ra:	They give to the wife-clans:
Bhai bandun tun kitor ra.	They give to the brother-clans.
Lotor yise māney ra	The people of the house
Johār bhatu kindur ra.	Salute them with Johar.
Johār bhatu kishun ra	After the Johar greeting
Apun āpunlokhe kandur ra.	The visitors go home.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

The next song refers to the erection of the booth in honour of the Water Maiden whence the motiari carry the pot containing the soul up to the house.

Chole dada re re le	Come, brothers!
Gari poto hintor ra	The Gaita's son
Gaitana marri hintor ra,	Makes a seat,
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!
Rāni haniyātun gari ra	In the Rani's name
Hintor nima girta āmu ra.	For you he makes a seat.
Nima rāni dāyu ra!	Come O Rani!
Nima penu atoni ra.	You have become our god.
Garh hutiyār mata ra	The house is ready
Rāni haniyāna āndu ra.	Of the Rani Kaniya.
Garh lopa bārāng ra?	What is there in the house?
Ghar lopa jhulna ra,	There is a swing in the house,
Sono tāye jhulna ra,	The swing is of gold,
Chāndi tāye sakri ra,	The chains are of silver,
Hira tāye gādi ra	The throne is of diamonds
Gādi poroy udila ra.	On which she sits.
Tāna poroy iteke ra	Above her
Jora chawar ārtu ra.	Are a pair of fly-whisks.
Dari dipte gajur ata ra;	In this world there is much noise;
Niya sangnor girta ra	Come, for your friends
Alor nima acho dayu ra.	Are happy.
Manjhpurte chim arta ra	In the Middle World is silence;
Nima echo dayu ra.	Therefore come.
Silāwāri layāk ra	Silawari is a maiden,
Dātu bai dātu ra,	Come, girl, come,
Mawa jiwa oit ra;	Bring our *jiwa* home;
Harik maute dāyu bai	Come willingly
Lone nima mandahi ra.	And live in our house.
Samdhi saga wator bai.	The wife-clan people have come, girl.
Helār bai walang ra,	The sisters have come,
Dand lanre matar ra,	Come by the path,
Lone tike wontor ra.	Come home with the soul.
Ai ai ai ai!	Ai ai ai ai!

Another song, recorded at Kokori, refers to the wild and lonely life of the soul in the jungle before it is brought home to live in the granary.

Bābu oole bābu na!	Brother, O brother!
Tuy bale bābu sunu!	Listen to us, brother!
Jau bābu jau na!	Go, brother, go!
Jau bābu jau!	Go, brother, go!
Kaha bale jawa bābu?	Where should I go, brother?
Kaha bale jau?	Where should I go?
Pāni ghāte jau bābu,	Go to the place of water, brother,
Bāra bali kholi.	Where there are twelve rooms.
Jhar bhitar rahis bābu;	You were living in a tree;
Ban bhitar rahis;	You were living in the forest;
Pāni ghāte jau bābu.	Go to the water-place, brother.
Pāni ghāte jau.	Go to the water-place.
Burjaun rahis bābu,	You were in the dust, brother.
Pāni nahank karu.	Now go to bathe.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

769●
539

Pāni nahauk jau bābu,	When you have bathed, brother,
Gadiya baiuk jau.	Go, sit in the granary.
Nāwa luga pidun bābu,	Wearing a new cloth, brother,
Gadiya ne baiwa.	Sit in the granary.
Chāti cho dhar howun bābu,	Like a line of ants, brother,
Ghare bale jau.	Let us go home.
Age din cho dāda bābu,	The elders of former days,
Utay miluk jau.	Go to mix with them.

This song, which is in Halbi, refers to the custom of east Kondagaon (and of other parts) of keeping the soul in the granary. The song ensures that the soul will come happily. It is said that the souls of the dead hear all things on earth the wrong way round. Mourning sounds to them like merry-making, and a song sounds like a wail.

VIII. The Bazaar Ceremony

769

In some villages in the Kondagaon Tahsil the Muria go to the nearest bazaar to buy parched rice, gram and liquor. They walk round the shops scattering the rice and gram and then visit the grave of the dead man. Here they eat and drink a little and then go home saying to the soul of the dead, 'Come home with us'. They go into the Room of the Departed and it is believed that the soul follows them.

The mourners go to a bazaar. The women carry rice, bread and sweets in their baskets and sit down near the market-place, but away from it. They pretend to have a bazaar of their own and the men of the party go to them and pretend to buy. The widow or the chief female mourner, if the deceased was a man, comes and sits in the middle of the party; the Gaita offers fire and incense and the rest give her leaves and flowers. In some villages it is supposed that it is at this time that the soul of the dead man mixes with his ancestors. Then the widow leads the party widdershins round the bazaar and comes home. On their arrival at the house the mourners say to her, 'Now let us depart. You have had great sorrow, for your life has left you. You have had great expense, but don't worry. Live happily and eat your fill. God has given you sorrow, but if you brood on this sorrow overmuch who will care for your children?'

In the Mardapal Pargana they performed the same ceremony by walking round the place where the cattle rest at midday. In other villages, specially those at some distance from a bazaar, the people hold a mock bazaar in their own compound putting out for sale old clothes, bits of wood, seeds and beans. Instead of money they use the broken pieces of an earthen pot. This does not seem to take the place of the ordinary ceremony of bringing the soul in a pot from the river but is supplementary to it. If for any reason these ceremonies are not performed, a cock is sacrificed annually at the year's end. A *saja* 'tooth-twig' is also given so that the dead man can clean his teeth before eating.

The ceremonies are confused and vary from village to village and even from time to time. But the main outlines are clear. The soul of the dead man is supposed to be living outside his home and must be brought back. People go to the nearest stream or tank and catch some living creature which they bring with dance and song, and sometimes with an elaborate ceremonial, to his old home. There they believe the soul will rest for a time. Afterwards they take the ring representing the soul to the central shrine of all the members of the clan. There is thus a double mingling of a man's soul with the Departed,

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

●769 first with the immediate members of his own family in his own house, and then with all the members of his clan.

IX. The Pot of the Departed

Funeral rites and memorial pillars or stones emphasize the importance of the dead to the outside world and to the neighbours, but for the family, attention centres round the Hanal Kunda or the Pot of the Departed, a large earthen pot which is kept in a dark corner of the inner room of a Hill Maria house and in the store-room by the Bison-horn Maria. Among the Hill Maria this room is often called the Hanal Kholi or Room of the Departed. In addition to the Pot there is also a Hearth of the Departed on which the housewife must cook new grain at each of the First Eating festivals. In the same room various stores are kept. Among the Bison-horn Maria the room dedicated to the dead is the Wijja-lon, the third of the three buildings of which their homes are normally composed. This room is generally used as the seed-room or granary and is almost entirely filled with a large platform on which pots, baskets and sacks are placed. In one corner, however, there is the Pot of the Departed and near it the sacred hearth. The Jhoria Muria and other Muria also keep the pot inside their houses, sometimes in the ordinary store-room, sometimes in the granary. As we move east across the Kondagaon Tahsil, however, the custom shows signs of weakening and there are villages where a special permanent pot is not preserved in private houses, though there is usually one in the Hanalkot, or corporate house of the dead.

This Pot of the Departed is quite distinct from the little pots in which the soul of a dead man is brought back to the house and taken to the Hanalkot in order to be mingled with his house and clan ancestors. It is a permanent pot to which special offerings are made on all important occasions of Muria life.

New grain and vegetables are cooked in it at the appropriate festivals. From time to time women put a little rice and flour into it. In the north of the State, as at Khutgaon, two pots were kept for the dead in the kitchen, one full of rice and the other empty. At every meal the housewife transferred a pinch of rice from the full into the empty pot in honour of the Departed. When the empty pot was filled members of the household, but no others, cooked and ate it. At an engagement ceremony, a cowrie is put in the pot to compensate the family ancestors for the loss of a girl from their clan.

There are various rules about this pot. No man may remove anything from it. No unmarried girl above the age of puberty may approach it. The reason for this is that the unmarried girls of the family will shortly be leaving the house and will be transferred to another clan and their connexion will be with a different pot in someone else's house. At a Muria marriage also, when the bride comes to her new home, her mother-in-law shows her the Pot of the Departed and a rice-husker saying, 'These things now are yours, care for us, honour the dead, give food to all, entertain strangers'.

X. Memorials to the Dead

Throughout Bastar menhirs are erected in memory and in placation of the dead. The Hill Maria, the majority of the Bison-horn Maria, some of the Dorla, and the Muria of the north and west still maintain their megalithic culture. Even the eastern Muria continue it in a special form that we shall presently consider. The custom has, however, been abandoned in certain areas and by certain clans.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The stone erected by the Muria is an upright menhir called *uraskal* (from Gondi *uraana*—to bury, and *kal*—a stone) or *kotokal*. At Surewahi, near Antagarh, the villagers called the 240 menhirs of their memorial field *khamakal*. They stand from 2 to 8 feet high, and may be 1 foot to 4 feet broad and 6 to 10 inches thick. The Muria of eastern Kondagaon sometimes set up little menhirs not more than a foot tall. 769●

The menhirs are erected for men, women and children, and usually stand in long rows by the roadside, near the village boundary, in the neighbourhood of the cemetery, or even in the village itself. Nearly always a small flat stone supported on two other stones is placed at the foot. This little cromlech is called the *kandi-garya*, or 'ghost-throne', and is used as an altar of sacrifice. Stones for men and women are usually put separately, and anyone who has died a suspicious death has his menhir apart from the others.

Hutton has referred to the megalithic culture of Bastar as 'now apparently rapidly decaying',[1] but the Jhoria Muria continue to erect menhirs everywhere and so do the other Muria of Narayanpur Tahsil and western Kondagaon. As we move east, however, and come more and more into the midst of Muria whose ancestors migrated south from the Central Provinces, the megalithic tradition tends to disappear, though it survives here and there, as we shall see, in curious and interesting forms. 769 178

Why should a practice so widespread, so reasonable and so harmless to mankind have disappeared in the areas I have mentioned? The answer is not an easy one. Sometimes there is an actual difficulty in getting stones, and the Muria naturally do not care to transport great slabs of rock across great distances. The reason most commonly given is expense. This is probably the true reason, for the cost of erecting a menhir is considerable. A great feast has to be given; one or more cows must be sacrificed, and perhaps pigs and chickens as well; large quantities of liquor must be provided; and the carriers of the stone must be properly rewarded. Grigson, however, discussing this problem among the Maria, thinks that the question of expense is not the real reason, pointing out that many aboriginals spend a great deal of money on their marriages; he suggests that the true reason is contact with Hinduism 'with its veneration of the cow'.[2] This may be true of a few villages near Jagdalpur or Dantewara or of those Maria and Muria who have come under the strong influence of the Palace or the cult of Danteshwari. But I believe that in spite of ardent denials to officials and visitors, beef is still eaten from one end of Bastar to the other. In fact, there is evidence that the last few years have seen a revival of beef-eating. In any case, where a forked stick takes the place of a menhir, the fork is intended as a holder over which the tail of the cow should be hung.

It is more likely, certainly along the main roads and in the east, that there is a desire to imitate the Hindu custom of erecting elaborate tombs for the dead. Many of these may now be seen, with a small shelter over them, and a pot hanging above.

The break-up of the clan system, according to which in the old days the country was divided into definite clan areas, each with a central shrine for the clan god and one central place for the erection of all the menhirs of the clan, has been an important factor. The clans now are so scattered and their *khuts* or territory is so divided up that many Muria have never been to their original *pen-rewar* or clan headquarters. The menhirs are no longer erected

[1] J. H. Hutton, Introduction to Grigson, op. cit., p. xv.
[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 280.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 at the spiritual capital of the clan-*bhum*, but are often placed in the village where the dead man used to live. I will return to this point immediately; it will 178 be sufficient to say now that the break-up of any form of organization is likely to cause a parallel decline in custom.

The association of the dead with the clan god is seen not only in the custom of erecting menhirs in the clan-*bhum*, and the use of an expression like Penhanal, but also in the Muria practice of taking the soul from the house to the Hanalkot which is always connected with one special clan. This was clearly illustrated at Phunder, where an earthen pot, full of rice, hangs above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any member of the clan dies, the mourners take his soul here, sprinkle the blood of a sacrificed chicken above the clan-pot, and thus leave the soul of the dead with his clan ancestors. Once a year, at the first New Eating ceremony, the Gaita removes the pot and changes the rice in the name of the Departed.

XI. The Erection of a Menhir

769 The Muria regard it as necessary to bring the stone for their menhirs and the wood for the manufacture of the clan gods from special forests and hills. At Kokori the Naitami clan bring their stones from Chapadongri, the Maravi from Mahadeodongri. The Kalo clan of Mahurpat used to fetch their *kotokal* stones from Boga in Kanker State. One of their ancestors, they say, turned into stone (*kal*) on a hill near this place: they stole the stone and since then have been known as Kalo.

Since the Muria generally use small stones they seldom have to quarry them, but pick them off the ground. When people go to the forest for wood or to hunt they keep a look out for suitable surface stones.

The actual erection of the stone is done by the Jhoria Muria in largely Hill Maria fashion,[1] but here it is the chelik and motiari who escort the menhir to its place with their drums and dances. In the Paralkot area, when an old man dies, an *akomāma* relative dances with an axe over his shoulder in front of the stone and the boys and girls follow drumming and singing. In Phulpar they said that on this occasion, which here they called Kal Ursana or stone-burying, an *akomāma* relative beats the *hātur-dhol* or death-drum in front of the house of the deceased and chants a refrain: 'You are dead now; today we will devour your wealth with pleasure.'

I will give an example of the procedure followed at Kehalakot village. Birju Kando decided, as a result of dreams which troubled him, to erect a stone in memory of his parents. Stones for this clan have to be brought from a hill called Deodongri. He took with him the Gaita of the Hichami clan which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kando clan, for it is the rule that the removal of the stone must be performed by a member of such a clan. The Gaita made a *chok* in front of the stone and offered liquor, pulse and rice, then dug it up. At first they could not get it out of the ground and the Gaita declared that the dead man was annoyed about something and they offered a black chicken to appease him. Once they had got the stone out of the ground they placed it on a specially prepared litter, covered it with fresh cloth and brought it to the *bhum* of the Kando clan, being careful not to take it through any village on the way.

As they brought it near, the dead man's sister and daughters stopped them, standing in a line across the path, and demanded rings. Birju gave them a

[1] See Grigson's description, op. cit., pp. 276ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

rupee to purchase rings in the bazaar. The Hichami Gaita then dug the hole and they put a saja leaf in the bottom and the stone above it. Soon afterwards a second stone was brought for Birju's mother and this was placed separately, for it is the rule that the memorials for men and women should not usually be together, though this rule, like all rules, is often broken. They bathed the stones and put a *gappa* basket with roots and rice in front of the woman's stone and a dish in front of the man's. Everyone present put a mark of oil and haldi on the stones, just as they might have done at a marriage to the bride and bridegroom. They returned home and sacrificed a bullock and tied the tail to the old man's menhir. On this occasion the souls of the deceased were brought back to the Hanalkot, which stands in the village itself. 769

The cow or bullock is often chosen by old people while they are still alive. Widows, who may reasonably expect to be neglected, are insistent on dedicating such an animal.

XII. General Ideas about the Menhirs

There is a universal belief that the memorial stones grow in size if the soul of the dead is satisfied with the arrangements that are made for him. I have on several occasions spoken to the Muria of the north (who erect very much smaller stones than the Maria of the south) about the great *urashal* of the Bison-horn Maria. They invariably reply, 'But, of course, these stones are very old and they have grown; they could never have put up such big ones'. They believe that even the small stones of the north will grow in time. Kodu, the very intelligent Malguzar of Khutgaon in the extreme north of the State, told me that in the past twenty years he has definitely seen the stones grow in size. A very small stone is put for a baby and it is believed that it will grow gradually until it has reached the size it should have been had it been placed for a man of twenty.

When a stone grows it is considered fortunate. There is sure to be happiness and good luck for the family. If a stone falls down or goes crooked, the relatives consult the Siraha and then put it straight and offer whatever sacrifices he has recommended. It is generally supposed that when a stone falls, it is an indication that the ghost of the dead is angry or feels neglected. In some places, the collapse of a menhir is regarded as prophetic of disaster, and generally should white ants make a nest over the stone it is considered a bad omen. But in some places there is a belief that there is no need to worry about this after twenty years have passed. After twenty years the Hanal has become completely mingled with his ancestors and no longer exists as a separate entity. When an old stone falls down, therefore, the Muria performs no ceremonies and leave it where it is. [781]

XIII. The Hanal Pata

It is very difficult to persuade the Muria to repeat the songs connected with death at any but the proper time. This is quite natural, for there is to all simple minds something dark and ominous about talking of the dead. I did not find a Hill or Bison-horn Maria who was willing to repeat a single song. It has only been among the more open-hearted and friendly Muria that I have been able to get a few songs, mostly in Gondi, which are used during a funeral and at the time of erecting a menhir. I have already given the funeral songs; I will now quote a few songs used at the later ceremonies. 533 761 769

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

769
539

From Sonawal village comes a Halbi song used at the time of quarrying the stone.

You were on the ground, O stone!
Come now to our house, and see your children.
Once you were a man,
Now you are a god (*deo*).
You were in the grave, O man!
Today we bring you to your home.
We will all feast and drink
In memory of you.
Ri ri loyo ri ri loyo!

The next step is to bring the stone to the memorial ground. Here is another Halbi song—which can also be used at the time of placing a memorial pillar at the grave.

Hearken, brother, hearken, brother!
You were a tree, brother,
You were a stone, brother,
You were out on the hillside, brother.
Today we remember you.
Come to your house, brother, for you are growing old.
Come to the granary and live with your family.
Limb to limb we will live with you,
We will hold each other's arms.
Come to the house, come to the granary.
We have no knowledge, teach us wisdom.
The clansmen are sitting: go to the house.
The clansmen have come in crowds,
Though the court is small and narrow.
There is not enough rice,
How are we to feed the clansmen?
There is nothing in the house;
Go, brother, and give them something.
There is not enough curry,
Yet thick as sal trees are the clansmen.
There is liquor from twelve stills,
Yet there is not drink for a drink apiece.
There are twelve sacks of rice,
Yet there is not enough to give each visitor a helping.
There are five measures of salt, three measures of chilli,
Two measures of haldi, yet there is not enough.
What can we do? You teach us.
Give us food, brother, and then there'll be enough.

This stress on the practical difficulties of entertainment is typical. As we have seen, many clans have abandoned the practice of erecting menhirs because of the expense. It may be noted that here a situation seems to be visualized in which the *kolohal* stone is erected at the same time that the soul is brought home to the house.

We now come to songs sung at the actual placing of the stone in position. It is probable that many of these songs are interchangeable; we must not think of them as carefully chosen and arranged as in an English hymnal.

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

Re re loyo re re la! re re loyo re re la!
Re re laita he ayo re! Ayo bāba re re la!

Sora bora dhartin ra,	Sixteen-, twelve-storied earth,
Nāwa khandi prithi ra.	Nine-storied world.
Ide dharti te mandaki ra.	Lie down here to rest.
Nike kotum ta otum ra.	We leave you in the forest.
Mamat iga mandakom ra.	We shall not be here.

This song, in sharp distinction from its predecessor, lays all the stress on the fact that the soul is to stay in its stone house in the jungle. I will now give another Gondi song used at the erection of a *kotokal*. At the end of each line there is a refrain almost like a sigh—*Ye budha, O old man!*—addressing the dead.

Yenda budha yenda budha!	Dance, old man, dance!
Nikun huri wātom ra.	We have come to see you.
Niya helār miyār rāndom ra,	Your sons and daughters have come,
Niya samdi saga wātorom.	Your relatives have come.
Udak dārango tatorom,	We've brought some liquor,
Niya bāta tatorom.	We've brought it for you.
Niya karsār huri wātorom,	We've come for your ceremonies,
Hariyer mante yetā ra.	To make you happy.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Keri gābo mendul ra.	Your body is like the pith of a plantain tree.
Bes mundāng kālku ra.	Your legs are like fine pillars (of a house).
Berel āki chhāti ra.	Your chest is like a banyan leaf.
Kurawal pite tala ra.	Your head is like an owl's.
Ali āki moha ra.	Your face is like a pipal leaf.
Usir gatta chundi ra.	Your hair is like the usri grass.
Chundi malkeh komu ra.	Shake your hair.
Tindi hursi wāyom ra.	We haven't come to watch you eat.
Hariyer mante yenda ra,	Dance full of happiness,
Niya Māhāl kiyhom ra.	We are making a palace for you.
Aga baga ron penu ra?	Where does your god come from?
Dhamda ton penu ra.	The god is from Dhamda.
Kenja budha kenja ra.	Listen, old man, listen.
Māhāl lopa barang ra?	What is inside the palace?
Sono taya jhulna ra,	If there was a golden swing inside,
Bārāng bāne āyuār ra.	How beautiful it would be.
Jhulna jhule mayu ra	Swing to and fro on the swing
Nikun sewa kiyhom ra.	And we will serve you.
Nikun puja kiyākom ra,	We will give an offering for you,
Kāla menda kiyākom ra.	We will give a black ram for you.
	[*The dead man speaks*]
Tāne bhojān hewon ra,	I won't eat that,
Pujāri lāme lengra kimu ra.	I must have the long-tailed one.
Tāne bhojān kiyaka ra	I will eat that
Pujāri ahar dupu kimu ra.	If you give some incense.
Achha sewa kimu ra	Serve me well
Girdā wānāh kimu ra.	That I may be well pleased.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

769 539 'The long-tailed one' mentioned in the song is, of course, a bull. Lanji-Dhamda is the traditional home of many of the northern Muria whence they migrated into Bastar.

I have already given extracts from the lengthy song recorded at Dugabangal,[1] which is sung during the transport and erection of the stone; it is interesting to note how closely life and love and death are allied in Muria thought, which regards them as a single process. The bulk of this Hanal Pata is indeed about life, and only at the tragic end do the singers discourse of death.

The song begins with some sententious lines about the universality of death.

Sora dhāru dharti roye deva,	Sixteen-storied world,
Nau khandu pirthi ra ale!	Nine-storied earth!
Singār mālor dīpu roye deva;	Here is the island of mankind;
Igāy hāywālor ra ale.	Here all die.
Māne manja igāy roye deva,	Men, ants, worms,
Hurr pate igāy ra ale,	Animals are here,
Bhagavān ise pandtu ra deva,	Bhagavan has made them,
Saboy tune pandtu ra ale.	He has made them all.
Kondāng manās hurāna ra,	See with the eyes,
Kālku manās dāyna ra ale,	Walk with the feet,
Kaiku manās hām kiyāna ra,	Work with the hand,
Tori manās barkāna ra ale.	Talk with the mouth.
Idām bhagavān pandtu ra,	So has Bhagavan ordained,
Singār mālor dwīpute ra ale.	So provided in this world.
Bāhchitek ise igāy ra,	Here men quarrel,
Koyma kitek igāy ra ale,	Here men laugh,
Dharmu kitek igāy ra,	Here is virtue,
Pāpu kitek igāy ra ale.	Here is sin.
Ide singāl dwipone'ra	In this world
Rājālor ise mantor ra ale.	Live royally.
Samdhi saga igāy ra,	Here are the samdhi clans,
Bhaibānd igāy ra ale.	Here too are the brother-clans.

After this the song continues along the lines which I have already given.

XIV. Substitutes for the Menhir

769 The Muria erect memorial poles and pillars as well as stones. At Modenga they described how they made a small bundle of straw with rice inside it called *dhusir* for a man and a small bamboo basket (*gappa*) for a woman. They put marks of haldi and oil as at a marriage on the wooden pillar and some also on both the baskets and give them to the sister or daughter of the dead. The girl has to take these to the house and from that day has to worship Lagar Pen who comes to the house then. Every three years thereafter she must offer a pig to Lagar Pen. If she has given birth to a male child in the interval a male pig will be sacrificed, and if a girl has been born a female pig.

It is generally said that the erection of the wooden pillar and the application of oil and haldi to it represents the second wedding of the dead. Here the pillar is usually made of saja. At Phauda the Muria described how the saja branch must be cut by a member of an *akomāma* clan after he has offered rice, pulse and liquor to it saying, 'I am going to take you in honour of the

[1] See pp. 89–92.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

dead'. He covers it with a new cloth and ties it round with a string seven times, turning the pillar round and round. After it has been put in position, the ground in front is cow-dunged and three circles of flour are made. A pot of water is placed in the central circle and the Gaita says to the pillar, 'Now I will take you home'. A representative of the dead man's family makes a mark on it with haldi and oil and offers a little rice and a pice. Only the one representative of the bereaved family does this, though all the members of the wife-clans do so. They sacrifice two chickens and offer liquor to the pillar and go home. They kill a bullock and come back with the tail and tie this to the pillar saying, 'We have now given you everything, don't bother us or put us to any loss'. The *akomāma* relative carries the pot of water back to the house of the dead man and places it near the Pot of the Departed. They offer it liquor there and ask the dead man always to remain there and live together happily with the other ancestors. 769

The Muria sometimes make fairly elaborate graves. I saw one very interesting tomb at Gudripara. An old man named Maria Muria of the Poyami sept died in February 1940. He had cleared the jungle with his own hands, established the village, planted mango trees, founded the ghotul, ruled the community as its mukaddam for many years. So although his *bhumiyār* would normally be at Kokameta, the villagers made a tomb for him in his own village. It was built exactly a year after his death, in February 1941. Since Bhagavan had taken his spirit, a 'Bhagavan-diya' or lamp was placed on the top. All round were relics of the dead man—cloth tied to sticks, traps, baskets, pots, spoons, a spindle for preparing hemp-cord. Most interesting of all was a small menhir placed in front of the tomb. Here met in one place Muria, Gond and Hindu customs.

In Phunder I saw an elaborate tomb for a very old man, Rai Singh Thakur, who died in 1937. On the top of the tomb was an earthenware horse with an image of the dead man riding upon it and an elaborate trident. Rai Singh's son, Nergu Maravi, gave a small bullock to the Kumhar for making the horse and another bull to a Lohar for making the trident. As the dead man was a great drinker, his son and grandsons regularly offer liquor at his grave.

But the most common substitute for the memorial pillar is simply nothing at all. The graveyards and cremation grounds of the Muria dead are sad and pathetic witnesses to the vanity of human hopes and ambitions. There may be a ring attached to a tree; you may see a few stones and logs upon the grave; sometimes there are pots or poles at the four corners; there may be a decorated spire (as at Binjhli), or an iron lampstand (as at Phunder) in the centre. Nearby are a few bits of grave-furniture, a baby's cradle, some simple toys, cooking-pots for women, traps or baskets for men. But by none of these can a man's name be preserved. A few seasons wash them with their rains, a bear or hyena digs up the ground. Only the memorial stone can survive even for a while the chances of mortal life.

XV. Remnants of Megalithic Culture in Eastern Kondagaon

Throughout their entire territory the Muria preserve some form of megalithic culture, but this grows less and less prominent as we move towards the east. When we cross the road and move east towards the Orissa border, the custom of placing large menhirs almost disappears, though some tradition of using stones in memory of the dead survives.

This survival takes several different forms. Sometimes a very small stone is brought and placed on the ground near the Hanalkot or elsewhere;

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

●769 sometimes a single stone is erected for a whole clan; sometimes a stone is combined with a modern tomb.

At Kanhera, when the time comes for performing some ceremony to content the dead, the relatives are summoned and they go to the nearest stream. A representative of the family and an *akomāma* relative go together into the water while the people on the bank call upon the dead. The two men duck under the water and one or other brings up a stone or a fish. If it is a fish they put it into the pot and take it home in the ordinary way; if it is a stone they dress it in a new cloth and carry it along till it falls down of its own accord. They bury it there, wherever it may be, put a small marriage crown upon it and anoint it with haldi, then go dancing home.

In Bopna village there is a deep pool in a neighbouring stream. When, after some years, there have died three or four people whose spirits must be mingled with their ancestors, the mourners go to this pool and make the usual offerings on the bank. Presently Bara Pen comes on one of the *akomāma* relatives and he goes down into the water calling on the spirits of the dead to draw near. As he takes one name his foot strikes against a stone and he picks it up; he takes another name and again picks up the stone below his feet. He then takes these stones to the Hanalkot (which is underneath a saja tree) and puts them on the ground saying, 'They will go down into the ground of their own accord'. The mourners anoint them with haldi and sacrifice a pig, killing it with a rice-husker. It is generally believed, wherever this custom exists, that the stones will bury themselves. Should they remain above the ground it is considered a bad omen.

In other villages the people do not go to the river but a samdhi goes to any part of the jungle where there are a lot of stones and throws rice at them saying, 'Throwing rice upon you I invite you to come'. The next morning he goes again and searches for any stone that may have fallen over during the night. This stone is supposed to contain the soul of the deceased and is taken as a memorial to the Hanalkot. In Kokori they said that when the stone fell over of its own accord, the Siraha offered it liquor and then an *akomāma* relative picked it up and carried it 'as if it were a baby' to the Hanalkot. There they covered it with cloth, tied a marriage crown and made the marriage marks of haldi, while the chelik and motiari danced before it.

In Banjora I found a different tradition. A few days after death the Muria in this village dedicate a pig, washing its feet and offering it rice. They then let it wander where it will. If after five years no wild animal has killed it they go into the forest for a memorial stone. When they have found a suitable stone, they sacrifice the pig before it. They anoint the stone with haldi and bring it to the Hanalkot, where it plants itself in the ground of its own accord.

At Randhna village, the Muria put either a wooden pillar or a stone, according to the revelation made to the Siraha in each case. An *akomāma* relative goes into the jungle to find one or the other. If a stone is indicated he sits down beside it; if a pillar, he cuts the tree, usually a saja, carves it roughly with a large ball on the head, and sits there. Then, led by the motiari and chelik with their drums, the relatives come singing and dancing and say to him, 'We have come to fetch a memorial for our dead; will you give it or no?' He says, 'Yes, I will give it'. They offer haldi and liquor to the pillar or the stone and then the *akomāma* picks it up and comes towards the village, the chelik and motiari dancing round him. Now the dead man's soul comes into the stone and guides the man here and there until it is satisfied. At last, of its own accord it falls from his arms on to the ground. As elsewhere the *akomāma* relatives cover it with cloth and put on the marriage crown. They offer a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

bullock and enjoy a great feast. In Randhna I saw several such pillars and near them a few memorial stones. In Kopra there were three pillars and in Charkai one. 769

In Baghbera, not far from the Orissa border, there is a magnificent mango grove with shrines for Bara Pen and the Village Mother. Not far from these shrines, under a sarai tree, there is a stone about two feet high which is used as a memorial menhir for all members of the Poyami clan in that area. When any member of the clan dies the people come to the stone and make the usual offerings. When I saw it, there were two bundles of straw in the tree above, symbolizing the roof of the stone's temple, and a tethering rope which had been used for cow-sacrifice. Tied round it was a rope made of bark with its end splayed out to look like a flower. The Muria said that the origin of this was that a very old man of the Poyami clan died long ago and came to his descendants in a dream saying, 'In such and such forest there is a stone; bring it for me'. They did as he commanded and later when other members of the same clan died they too came in dreams and said, 'Take us to where our grandfather is'.

Finally there is the custom that we have already noticed, of placing a stone in front of a modern tomb. Here we can see clearly how ancient tradition survives alongside modern innovations.

XVI. The Danger of the Abnormal: Death from Wild Animals

The Muria have the most elaborate ceremonies to meet the dangers of abnormal death, for it is in their country that tigers are most common and tragedies most frequent. When such an incident occurs, the chelik collect the remains of the deceased and his possessions at the very place of death and burn them. They blow a hunting-horn over the pyre and run away. 766

A day or two later the male members of the house go to the spot with other villagers. They dig up some of the blood-stained earth and make an image of the dead man; with rice-flour they make an image of the tiger. They place these together inside two circles made of flour and haldi, and draw a line of flour representing a rope to join the two together. The Gaita sacrifices chickens and eggs, saying, 'Go and take your dog to some other land. Tie it up properly there and keep it safe. Don't bring it here, we don't want any dogs here'. Then he hits and breaks the model tiger with a sickle crying, 'Tiger! Tiger!'

The chickens are now cut up into a great many little bits, and some of these are given to members of the party and roasted and eaten on the spot. Bones and leaves used for this little feast must be buried carefully, for if a witch got hold of them she could use them to bring the tiger back. The party now breaks up and each member takes a solitary and zigzag route home, throwing away the little bits of chicken as he goes. The idea of this is that if the ghost of the deceased tries to return to his village, he will be puzzled by the roundabout route and will be so busy eating the bits of chicken that he will never get there.

Women do not attend this ceremony, for if a woman's shadow were to fall on the materials of the feast, the tiger would come again. But if a woman is killed by a tiger, a digging-stick is thrown into the ashes of the pyre with the idea that her ghost will take it to dig roots in the jungle and not trouble the people in the village.

After a few days all those who took any active part in the cremation ceremony—such as carrying the remains or preparing the pyre—go to the place

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE COURSE OF MURIA LIFE: AGE

The Departed and the ancestors are a sort of perpetual old guard keeping a sharp watch upon their descendants. They are a strictly orthodox and conservative body ever ready to take offence, always on their dignity, suspicious, revengeful, unsympathetic. The honour of the tribe is very dear to them and they are determined to see that it is not betrayed by their unworthy heirs. Any breach of tribal law, any change, any heterodoxy in thought or worship is immediately and drastically punished. 775 769

The Departed are, to some extent, associated with the fertility[1] of the land, but I have not anywhere found the belief that the menhirs can improve the crops and the soil. The Departed are remembered at sowing and harvest, at winnowing time and when the crops are brought to the granary. The Pot of the Departed is indeed often kept among the grain, and the soul brought home to live in the granary. But such remembrance is no more than is paid to the Departed at every chance and turn of mortal life. They are equally remembered when a man drinks liquor or marries his daughter or goes to a dance and, as I say, they are remembered not so much to ensure their blessing as to prevent their interference. 769 ●

The aim, therefore, of the Muria cult of the dead is above all things to put the Departed in their place, to keep them in order and to keep them quiet. Menhirs are set up, sacrifices are offered, endless pains are taken to ensure that the dead are not offended and in their spleen bring disaster upon the world. For the dead suffer an unfortunate change of character after they have left the earth. The kindest, friendliest, gentlest nature becomes warped through death, and in a sense it may be true to say that human beings who are still alive should feel a deep pity for their unfortunate companions who have gone before them into what is very truly a land of shadows. Perhaps this is why the Muria are so anxious to bring their dead back into their own families 'where they will find warmth and love' and where they will receive the comfort that they need.

[1] I have frequently noticed that traps are set in the graveyards and near the memorial stones. At Magheda I saw an ingenious peacock-trap within a few yards of the graves. At Baghbera there was a rat-trap under the shadow of the menhirs. At Markabera there was a tiger-trap similarly placed. It would be tempting to suggest that there is some deep connexion here but I think it is more likely that the traps are set in the graveyards because animals are attracted by the offerings of grain and roots that are made both to the menhirs and on the graves.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

The Bara Dongar party, richer by a few copper coins and a little rice, returned home the next day.

Among the Bastar gods, these Anga are the most widely regarded by the aboriginal population. They are homely and familiar, and closely related to the life of every day. They constantly intervene in human affairs. They are keenly sensitive to the presence of evil. Their position as gods of the clans gives them great influence, for it means they have to do with marriage and death, and all offences against clan custom and morality. The cult of the Anga is thus still very much alive and since it has been assimilated to the Hinduism of the Ruling Chief it is likely to endure.

But though the future of the Anga cult is assured, its origin is obscure. It is just possible, however, that this god whose name seems to be connected with the Sanskrit-Hindi word *anga*, meaning 'body',[1] has developed out of the cult of the dead and in particular from the custom of using the corpse carried on its bier as a means of divination.

Russell and Hiralal give an account of this for the Gond of the Central Provinces. I have not myself seen it in Bastar, but I am told that there is an exactly similar practice and Grigson has recorded it for the Hill Maria.[2] At a Gond funeral, says Russell, when the body has been carried on its hurdle to the disposal ground, 'the bearers with the body on their shoulders face round to the west, and about ten yards in front of them are placed three saja leaves in a line with a space of a yard between, the first representing the supreme being, the second disembodied spirits, and the third witchcraft. Sometimes a little rice is put on the leaves. An axe is struck three times on the ground, and a villager now cries to the corpse to disclose the cause of his death, and immediately the bearers, impelled, as they believe, by the dead man, carry the body to one of the leaves. If they halt before the first, then the death was in the course of nature; if before the second, it arose from the anger of offended spirits; if before the third witchcraft was the cause. The ordeal may be thrice repeated, the arrangement of the leaves being changed each time. If witchcraft is indicated as the cause of death, and confirmed by the repeated tests, the corpse is asked to point out the sorcerer or witch, and the body is carried along until it halts before someone in the crowd, who is at once seized and disposed of as a witch. Sometimes the corpse may be carried to the house of a witch in another village to a distance of eight or ten miles. In Mandla in such cases a Gunia or exorciser formerly called on the corpse to go forward and point out the witch. The bearers then, impelled by the corpse, made one step forward and stopped. The exorciser then again adjured the corpse, and they made a step, and this was repeated again and again until they halted in front of the supposed witch. All the beholders and the bearers themselves thus thought that they were impelled by the corpse, and the episode is a good illustration of the power of suggestion.'[3]

[1] In *The Ocean of Story*, there are puns on the Land of Anga and the body. Yasaskrta 'came to earth to conceal his body', a shameless pun, says Penzer, which could also mean 'to protect the realm of Anga'.—N. M. Penzer, *The Ocean of Story* (London, 1924–8), Vol. III, p. 13. And further, 'it is related in the *Ramayana* that Madana, the god of love, incurred the displeasure of Mahadeo. He fled from the hermitage of the latter to escape his consuming anger, and the region where "he cast off his body (Anga) ", or rather where it was reduced to ashes, has since been known by the name of Anga, and the God of Love has since been called by the name of "Ananga" (without body)'. —Nundolal Dey, 'Notes on Ancient Anga or the District of Bhagalpur', *JASB*, Vol. X, p. 317.

[2] Grigson, op. cit., p. 272.

[3] Russell and Hiralal, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 90.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

The similarity between this description and the account which I have just gives of the witch hunt at Palki is very striking. The dead are generally believed to communicate their desires to mankind and to give them instruction about the ordering of their lives. The dead are, of course, specially connected with the clan and its continuity. It is not altogether impossible that out of a cult of the Departed, where in former days the bier was used more than at present for divination and to express the will of the gods, there gradually developed the custom of substituting some symbol for the corpse and at last the 'Anga' for the bier.

This suggestion gets some support from a dream seen by a Bison-horn Maria convict shortly before the fatal quarrel which led to murder and his imprisonment. He dreamt of an Anga, a drum and a village-trumpet. The Anga, he said, stood for the corpse of the murdered man being taken out for burial and the drum and trumpet suggested the funeral. The Anga, he admitted, clearly foreshadowed his terrible deed had he only had the wit to understand it.[1]

It is just possible, of course, that the clan-god takes its name from the land of Anga, a great kingdom—one of the chief sixteen—of ancient India, which has been identified with the present district of Bhagalpur and part of the Santal Parganas. Its boundaries are uncertain and may have also included the districts of Birbhum, Murshidabad and Manbhum.[2] At the time of the *Atharva Veda*, the inhabitants were known as Anga and 'the contemptuous way they were mentioned suggests these were aboriginals'.[3] A connexion between the Muria and Bihar is not impossible and is suggested by many cultural similarities, but I have not found anything resembling the Bastar clan-god in the ethnographic records of Bihar.

V. Muria Temples

Mān to pen nahi to pāthar.—*If you believe, it is a god; if not, it is a stone.*—Muria saying.

J. D. Unwin defined a temple as a 'roofed building other than a grave-house, in which the power in the universe manifests itself and which is specially erected and maintained in order that a right relation may be preserved with that power, the building being such that a man can stand upright inside it'.[4] On this definition the Muria build temples and are in Unwin's 'deistic stage' of culture—a stage which, according to Unwin, is only achieved by those peoples which forbid pre-nuptial intercourse. The Muria provide a striking exception to Unwin's general theory and throw some light upon it.

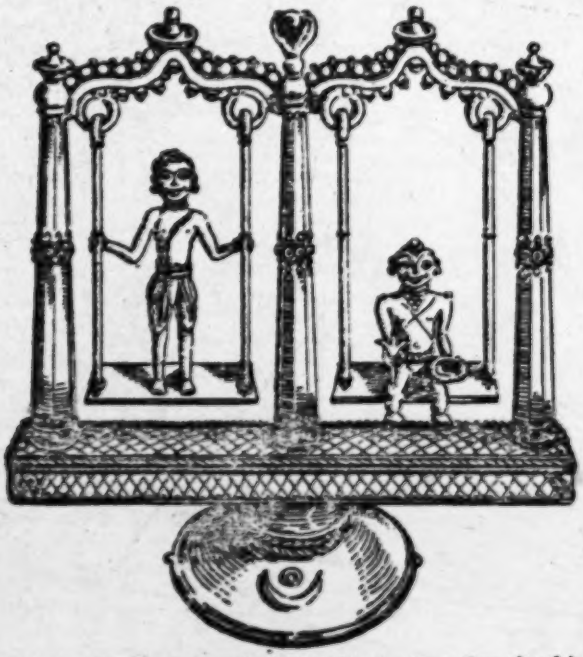
In a few Muria villages there are no temples. In Almer there is nothing but a few stone seats under saja trees, where the Village Mother is worshipped and the New Eating ceremonies performed. In Kajen the Village Mother forbade the erection of any shrines. But in most villages there are several buildings that fulfil the above definition of a temple. Sometimes these are scattered about the village, one put in the jungle, another in someone's field, a third actually in the compound of a house. In other villages, as for example in Bayanar and Adner, the shrines are all together in one spot where the divine power manifests itself. In Kabonga, the shrines looked like a little village.

[1] See *Maria Murder and Suicide*, p. 213.
[2] Day, op. cit., p. 318. [3] Ibid., p. 344.
[4] J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture* (London, 1934), p. 14.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

346 Just inside the gate of the enclosure there is a line of pillars and four stone seats. These poles are for the convenience of such visiting deities as are

[532]



Pic. 23. Brass swing, made by Ghasia, of a type often placed in Muria shrines
Breadth 8½"

represented by poles or flags and can be tied to the pillars; the stones also are seats for those gods who have a traditional or family right to come to the temple. Such are Kustirmago Pen, a cousin of Bhumiriya, an Uika god from Kasabahi; Lath Kuar, Bhumiriya's son, a Wadder god from Tadopal; Inde Muitar, a Karanga god of Suhnar and Son Kuar, son of Kanda Dokara, a Maravi god from Garhbangal. Near the gate of the enclosure is another stone of sacrifice where black hens are offered to the dead. One of the pillars is used to tie the buffaloes and bulls which are to be sacrificed to Bhumiriya.

[769]

Entering the temple, we find a clean open shed with broad wooden pillars on which are carved crude representations of the sun and the vagina. Here too are four stone seats. The chief is, of course, for the lord of the temple Bhumiriya himself. The second is for his father Bope Haruna who is brought every ten years to sit with his son. The third is for Dhursai Kuar, a son of the Pat Deo in Jagdalpur, who comes at festivals from Timnar, and the fourth is for Lalsai Kuar of Metawand.

[831]

From the roof hangs an earthen pot containing little bells and a bundle of peacock feathers. Another pot has in it a piece of cloth used as a flag at festivals. In the roof are ten large wooden spoons, which are used for the

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

times in a little house of their own, sometimes in a room lent to them by an old widow. Where there is a separate hut, this is sometimes also used for the segregation of menstruating women. In a few places there are special buildings for this purpose. The houses of the headmen are not built in any special position, but those of the Siraha medicine-men can generally be distinguished by the little huts for patients which are built round them. On the outskirts of the village will be found the shrine of the Village Mother, and in a grove nearby there may be the temple of one of the clan-gods. Beyond is the village burial place and cremation ground. Rows of menhirs in memory of the Dead may be seen in the majority of villages.

There is no standard pattern for the Maria house any more than there is for the Maria village. Most of the houses consist of three rooms, each a separate building with eaves at different levels, which make them look, as Grigson says, 'like card houses'. The first room, which is really a built-in verandah, is the kitchen. It leads into a bedroom and this in turn opens into an inner and secret room mostly occupied by a platform for storing grain and other possessions; in one corner is the Pot of the Departed about which centres the Maria cult of the Ancestors. Frequently two or more such houses are built round a courtyard, part of which is occupied by a more or less open building where people sit to talk and work.

Maria women's dancing-stick (3½' long)

The houses are generally clean and pleasant, but littered with a great variety of domestic and agricultural impediments. Outside are the pig-styes and cattle-sheds,

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

775 primitive opinion is that the soul goes to dwell with the ancestral Dead with whom it is mingled by appropriate ceremonies. These Dead are imagined as being in close touch with their kinsfolk living still on earth and are able to influence their affairs.

But side by side with this belief is a rudimentary theory of transmigration and rebirth, and at every funeral there are special rites to ensure that the soul will be reborn in the same family and will not go elsewhere. This theory is not necessarily inconsistent with the first, though it is not easy to see how once a soul is reborn again on earth it can continue to hold the office and perform the functions of an Ancestor. But the third theory is contradictory of the others. It is borrowed from the graveyard traditions of popular Hinduism. After death the soul is pictured as turning into a dangerous malignant ghost who has to be kept away from the house at all costs and be appeased from time to time with small offerings. We thus have the ridiculous situation that at a funeral some of the rites are directed to bringing the dead man's soul back to the house and settling him there in the Pot of the Departed while others are directed at keeping him at a distance, if possible beyond the village boundary. After death, in fact, the dead man becomes both soul and ghost, and suitable but different arrangements have to be made for each of these aspects of his personality.

● 769 We have seen that in the inner room of every Maria house 775 there is kept an earthen pot specially dedicated to the Dead; in the same room is the Hearth of the Departed. It is round this little shrine that there centres an extensive cult of the ancestral Dead. At the end of the funeral ceremonies the soul of the deceased is mingled with the other Dead through ceremonies connected with this Pot. Into it the woman of the house puts a little flour in honour of the Dead when she grinds, and here she cooks new grain at the harvest festivals. The Dead are very touchy and excitable. If the soul of a murdered man or a suicide or anyone who has died by tiger, snake, cholera, small-pox, drowning or a fall from a tree is sent to keep them company, there will be quarrels and in their annoyance they may cause great trouble to the living. They are specially sensitive to any infidelity on the part of the wife whose special duty it is to tend their shrine. They

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

indicate their will to the living through the Siraha or Waddai and by appearing to them in dreams, and it is considered highly dangerous to ignore their behests. 769 775

The necessity for their propitiation has affected every aspect of Maria life. Offerings are made to them at every festival and at every domestic or village ceremony. They are remembered as a matter of routine in every magic formula along with the Earth Mother, Danteshwari and other deities. A few drops of liquor are offered to them every time a Maria drinks. Fire from the hearth of the Pot of the Departed in the Gaita's house is used to light the first fire in the forest clearings and the sacred fires at festivals. The importance of the Ancestors, who remain as a sort of conservative society to safeguard the traditions of the tribe, will appear throughout this book and need not be elaborated now. 769

VII

Women dying in pregnancy or child-birth are buried, so are the victims of small-pox and of such other diseases as the Siraha may from time to time direct. All others are cremated, a fact which often makes police investigation difficult and even impossible. 764 766

At one time (I am not sure how far the custom survives) the Waddai was buried naked and in an upright posture. The first child of a house, if it dies under five years old, is buried in the same erect posture, with face to the east—as there is light there, and beneath a mahua tree—for it is fertile of flowers and fruit, a good omen for the family. 766 [787]

In a funeral the chief actors are the Hanagunda or Hanal-gaita, who is the master of ceremonies, and the sister's son or son-in-law of the deceased. The Hanagunda has to tie a thread round the corpse and hang the cow's-tail on the menhir. It is his wife's duty to wash the body, and to take cooked rice and haldi to the pyre. The sister's son has to climb on the roof to beat a drum to summon the relatives: he sits on the urasakal while it is being carried to its place; he makes the appointed offerings before the stone: he kills the sacrificial and festal cow. 764

After death the dead man is laid with his head to the east in the living room of his house. His sister's son takes a stick

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

764 Once again the party went to the stream, but the Gaita and the Waddai stayed behind and addressed the saja stick: 'For one month more you will get nothing, don't go to your house, but stay here'. After a bath they all (with the exception of the drummers) went to the deceased's house. The drummers, who are regarded as unclean for the duration of the ceremony, bathed and washed their drums. They applied and placed some rice on the drums. To them they also sacrificed a chicken and offered the blood and some liquor. The drummers were then given rice, which they cooked separately, and a shoulder of the cow. After eating their food they went to their own houses.

789 The conclusion of the story is worth recording. A month later, the Waddai went with the villagers to the boundary of the village carrying a chicken, a pig, an egg, egg-shells, a bamboo bow and arrow, burnt earth from below the hearth, charcoal powder, rice, pulse and haldi. All these things were taken in separate leaf-cups. The Waddai arranged them in seven rows and made a chicken eat the rice, calling on Markami Bando's magic to go away. The chicken ate the rice quickly. But this was not sufficient proof that the black magic had really been driven away, 'because every hungry creature will naturally feed upon what it can get'. The Waddai, therefore, tortured the chicken, first by breaking one leg, and still it ate; he broke another leg, and again it ate; then he broke the wings and the fowl though in pain and agony went on eating. It was now beyond doubt that Bando's magic had been dealt with successfully and the chicken was thrown away, still alive, and not sacrificed. The pig was then sacrificed and the Waddai drew a line on the boundary of the village where the seven rows were arranged, spat there and said, 'Away from this line' and they all departed without looking back. In this ceremony the household members did not take part.

The next day the Waddai sacrificed under a mahua tree near the house a white chicken and broke an egg in honour of the ancestral ghost of Kosa's father. After this he entered the house and sprinkled it with a mixture of milk, saja bark, 769 and dab grass to purify it and sacrificed a black chicken for the Ancestors of the family.

775 Special precautions must, of course, be taken when anyone

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

front, the sister's son beating his drum above. From time to time they put their burden on the ground to rest, and are refreshed with rice-beer. 764

When the party reaches the pit that has been prepared, the drummers throw the castor-sticks which they have been using hitherto on to the pyre, and take new sticks, which may be made of any kind of wood. Before the stone is erected the Gaita addresses the dead, 'You are dead and you must forget your father, your mother, your brother and your family. This is your house. Live here and do not trouble us or our pigs and cattle. We are giving you rice and pulse and everything that you had at home, so that you may be satisfied'.

In the hole which has been dug by the sister's son, the relatives put something or other, rice, small coins, rings or ornaments, whatever they can afford. The bearers untie the stone from its poles and all push and lift it into position. Earth and stones are rammed round the bottom and a small cromlech is placed in front. On this stone offerings are made by the sister's son with his back to the menhir. The women of the household come and put cooked rice and haldi in leaf-cups on the cromlech, and pour upon it grain, roots, or anything that the dead man used to like when he was alive.

Then the whole party returns to the house and one or more cows are sacrificed. These were probably selected by the dead man during his life-time. They remove the liver and cut it in pieces. Rice is prepared in the house of the dead and divided into four portions and put in leaf-cups. These cups, with the tail of the sacrificed cow and a pot of rice-beer, are carried out in a specially-made basket to the menhir. One portion is put on the ground for Mother Earth and the rest for the dead man on the cromlech. The tail is hung over the menhir and rice-beer poured upon it. At the same time a little rice-beer must be offered to the old menhirs. If this is omitted the ancient dead will be angry and will quarrel with the new spirit that has gone to join them. [769]

Rice-beer must be given both to the menhir and to the mourners. It must be made fresh in the room where death occurred and served with a gourd with a long handle that 764 273

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

837 get offended, and in their anger kill the cattle and other livestock. When an animal dies for this cause, its tongue protrudes and a watery discharge issues from its mouth. In Dhurli the Maria said that the guilty person might go blind, and in Mathadi we were told how an old woman did actually become blind as a result of betraying her husband. If a wife commits adultery when her husband is absent on a hunting expedition, her act will 'defile the earth' and the hunt will be ruined. The arrows will fly crookedly, and the husband himself may trip over a stump. He may be bitten by a snake or hit with an arrow. If the deceived husband is a magician, his vision will be clouded. If the proper ceremonies are not performed, he may be afflicted with a watery swelling that may cause death.

674 783 *If a murder is committed on account of adultery, the* families both of the murderer and his victim may suffer from this swelling. To prevent the danger, the elders of each house gather together; they mix milk and water in a leaf-cup of mahua leaves and say, 'These sinned; but let not their sin be on us'. Then a representative of each house drinks a little. The family of the murdered man gives a present (which is called in Halbi *bhul-karcha*) to the family of the murderer. A measure of rice is put under the eaves of the victim's house. In the rice there is placed some thread, a ring and an arrow. The two families feast together on pork and rice, and swear friendship with each other. The arrow remains as witness to their oath. Then the murderer's family [769] take the *bhul-karcha* home, and offer it to the Departed in their own house.

578 787 Quarrels are always dangerous, for they disturb tribal solidarity and may earn the vengeance of the Departed. Indeed it is dangerous even to dream of a quarrel; if you do, you should sacrifice to the Earth the next morning. If husband and wife are known to be constantly at odds with one another, a panchayat is held and one or both may be fined.

783 When Oyami Anda of Harmamunda carried off and married a girl for whom another youth was serving as Lamhada, he not only had to pay compensation for the work done by the other boy, but a ceremony was performed to purify both parties of enmity. Anda stood with the Lamhada

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

under the thatch by the door of his house. The palm of 783
his right hand was placed below the Lamhada's right hand. On the ground, below their hands, a pile of rice was made, and an arrow placed in it. Then the Waddai climbed on to the roof and poured down water which fell through the thatch on to their hands, and thence to the rice. After this a pig and two chickens were given to the Lamhada to be offered to his ancestors. The Waddai as clan-priest officiated [769] since the Dead of the clan were to be appeased.

A curious story related by Oyami Harma of the same 539
village illustrates the manner in which the Maria expect 773
supernatural punishment to fall upon the criminal. 'Long ago', said Oyami Harma, 'my ancestors, who were a family of seven brothers and one sister, were living beyond Bailadila. A youth of the Uika clan came as Lamhada for the girl, and in due time she was married to him. Twin boys were born, but after a few days one of them died. During Dassara the husband went to Jagdalpur at the invitation of the eldest brother and while he was away his wife together with the wives of the seven brothers went to reap the harvest, taking their two hunting-dogs. The surviving twin was taken with them, and as they were working, he was put to sleep in a swing. While the women were busy in the field, a hare jumped out of a bush and ran towards the baby. The two hunting-dogs chased it, and mistaking the baby for the hare bit him and killed him.

'When the husband returned he asked for his baby, and his wife said, "He has been taken out by our neighbour. First eat your food and then you can play with the child". The husband sat down and ate, and his wife told him what had happened. In the meantime the other brothers told their eldest brother of the child's death, and he was afraid that the bereaved father would revenge himself on him, because it was at his invitation that he had gone to Jagdalpur. So they all decided to run away. The father pursued them saying that it was they who were responsible for the death of his child. They went to Gadapal closely pursued by the angry father. In Gadapal there was a shrine for Kas Pona Pen which was in the form of a bird. This god hid the eldest brother under its wings, and when the father arrived at the shrine, he could find no trace of him. But as he